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A RAILROAD WAIF.

BY

MRS. C. B. SARGENT,

AUTHOR OF "GLIMPSES OF THE CELESTIAL COUNTRY,"
"THE MOTHER AND HER CHILDREN," ETC.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these
my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.—MATT. xxv, 40.

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True Worship.

FOR he whom Jesus loved hath truly spoken:
The holier worship which He deigns to bless
Restores the lost, and binds the spirit broken,
And feeds the widow and the fatherless.

O brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose holy work was “doing good;”
So shall the wide earth seem our Father’s temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

—WHITTIER.

A RAILROAD WAIF.

V.

 TRAIN of cars was moving slowly out of the Grand Central Station in one of our large Western cities, when a ragged boy rushed into the parlor car and begged an invalid lady to let him hide under the sofa where she lay, the shawl covering her reaching to the floor.

“I am afraid that I should do wrong to hide you. You have stolen something, or are running away from home,” she said.

“Sure’s I live, I’m just goin’ back home. I live down this road a piece, and just slipped away to see the circus. Mammy’ll be frettin’ herself thin if I do n’t get back.” And the little fellow, thin and puny himself, rubbed his soiled fists in his eyes, to excite the lady’s sympathy. “You see, I ain’t got no money to get home; paid it all for the circus and some lunch, and the conductor ’ll put me off if you do n’t let me hide.”

For a moment the invalid's brain was puzzled; but lunch was no familiar word to a country boy. She put on her glasses, and looked carefully at him. Yes, he was plainly the growth of some city alley. No ruddy, tanned face and sun-burnt hair were here, but the sallowness and grime of city life among the poor. Little rascal as he evidently was, her heart ached for him. Her own little ones had grown up and gone out into the world—some of them into the world of light; and this waif, as the child of our Father, had a claim upon her. He had asked her aid, and she must help him.

"Please let him stay a few moments," she said to the conductor. "Do you know any thing about him?"

"No, madam; but he's probably a wharf-rat."

"No more a wharf-rat than you be," said the boy, indignantly. "We had a nice room on Cherry Alley, and mother took in washin', and sent me to school; but the flood driv us out, and she worked so hard savin' her things, and it was rainy and cold, and her cough got that bad they took her to the hospittle; and first they would n't let me see her, and then they said she was dead and buried."

"Is your father dead, too?"

"No, ma'am; he's in the work'us for beatin'

mother and smashin' things up." And the shame on his face made the story credible.

"Where were you going on this car?"

"Way out West;" and the boy's eyes sparkled. "Goin' far out, where they've lots of horses, and pay you just to ride roun' and drive cattle. Sometimes you find a gold-mine, and come back awful rich."

"My poor boy," said the lady, "that is very far away. Unless you had fifty dollars to pay for riding in the cars, you would have to walk for months to get there. How tired you would be, and your feet so sore that often you would have to wait for days for them to get healed! You would be compelled to sleep in a tree to be safe from wild animals. You would find nothing to eat, unless you came to a house, or where people were camping out; and often for days you would never see a house or meet any one. On the hot, dry plains you would suffer from thirst, and would probably lie down and die in a few weeks, as thousands of grown people have done. You could not find gold without tools to dig among the rocks, and if you found any, some strong man would take it from you."

"Why, the stories and pictures tell about lots of boys who got ahead all right," said the waif; but his face wore a troubled expression.

"Would you like to live on a farm here? There are cattle and horses and green grass, and plenty of fruit, nice milk and butter, and good, sweet bread." The boy's eyes sparkled. "Now tell me your real name."

"Jim Mason," he said, humbly. "You may believe me now, ma'am; it's just what every body calls me."

She beckoned to the conductor. "This is a poor, homeless waif. You will do me a great favor if, in passing through the other cars, you will ask if any farmer there is willing to adopt a boy of ten, or, at any rate, to keep him until I can find a home for him."

It was an afternoon of burning sunshine, without a breeze. Every body felt uncomfortable, and no one was willing to assume an unnecessary burden. The boy stood looking anxiously at his friend; he had recognized the Christian spirit that impelled her to efforts beyond her strength, although he could not have named it.

"Do n't you want a cup of water, ma'am?" and, as she nodded assent, he brought it carefully. She was feverish with self-questionings as to her duty. One of the lost, whom Christ came to seek and to save, seemed to have been sent directly to her, and if she declined to do the Master's work, who would take it up? Yet her

health and strength were gone, nor could life itself long endure such daily suffering.

She was dependent upon the Christian charity of relatives, and was not able even to pay the boy's fare to her destination. Yet clearly came to her the passage, "Whosoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Again she addressed the conductor :

"There seems no way to provide for this boy except to take him myself; but I have not money with me to pay his fare to my home. Would your company be willing to pass him as a contribution to the open-air fund?"

The conductor belonged to the royal brotherhood, and his response was hearty :

"I think, ma'am, that if you are willing to take care of him, the company may easily give him free passage. If they object, I'll pay it myself."

She hastened to explain :

"I am going to my brother's house, and he may not be able to keep him. My present plan is to feed and clean and dress him up, and then, if my brother does not keep him, to find him a good home on a farm."

"You will do a good deed," he said.

The boy sat down on the carpet with a look of relief. The train sped on through the hot aft-

ernoon sun, while the doubt how her brother would receive this guest and the question whether she had a right to lay this burden on him made her heart beat painfully.

In the pleasant twilight they reached the station. She gave Jim her parcels, and said to her brother, as he lifted her from the car, "You must forgive me; but I want you to assume this burden for a few days, for my sake."

"All right," he replied cheerily; and Jim and the parcels were soon deposited at their feet in the carriage.

Through the village streets and over rough hills they passed, and soon entered the woods, through which the farm-road wound. Stately and tall rose walnut and beech, maple and oak trees—such a strange, grand place as the boy had never seen,—God's temple of native forest-trees! A sweet, unaccustomed sense of awe stole over him; but as they rode through the gateway, and the farm lay before him, astonishment took its place.

It was a beautiful sight to more cultivated eyes than his—the wide sweep of lawn around the house, stretching in front to the broad expanse of yellow wheat; on each side orchards; while at the back, sloping down to the broad creek, lay the garden. It was a humble name for the broad stream that, in some places, lay deep and still as

a pool, while long branches of willow and elm and sycamore bent over it; a few rods farther on it dashed and foamed over immense stones. At one point a high, unbroken wall of rock, on the opposite side, secluded it, and echoed distinctly any sentence spoken near. There were no inner fences in sight from the house. The whole place was inclosed by a hedge and belt of trees, that shut off the world, and gave the farm the appearance of lying amid primeval forests. Horses were tethered in the orchard, and cows and calves stood deep in the rich grass, pictures of quiet enjoyment.

Most of this he did not see that night; for then the great attraction was in the lighted house. All its doors and windows were open to the cool breeze, and the pretty tea-table stood ready, adding its welcome to the kind words of greeting.

If *only* he might stay here! This was far better than any thing he had read in the papers, and every body seemed so happy. He would do his best to please them, if they would let him stay; and some time he might have a horse and cow of his own! He feasted on the supper; and then the old colored man took him into the wood-shed, where a tub of water, soap, and towels were ready.

“It’s my ‘pinted duty to see that you give

yesself a powerful scrubbin', and it's your duty to do it. I'll set right here, and teach ye. Now, fust thing, the Mistis said, was to give yer har a good scrubbin'. Jest soap dat rag well, and rub it all over yer head. Thar, do it agin. Now duck yer head in the tub, and rense it off." The head came up gasping and half blind with soap. "Now take that ar towel, and rub it hard. Now wash your face and your arms, and then you can git in the tub, and scrub yourself clean." As Jim emerged from the bath with a strange sense of freshness, he began to appreciate the new luxury. "Now put on that clean gown, and I'll show you whar to sleep." Meanwhile old Hannibal had been thoroughly beating and brushing the soiled rags.

The little room over the wood-shed, with its open window, its bed of fresh straw, and the clean sheets and pillow, seemed paradise to the tired boy. He stretched his limbs in the cool bed with a sense of rest and enjoyment utterly unknown before. He had lain down nightly on the musty rags that were his only bed, because he could sleep there; but this luxurious rest was a new revelation to him. Why, this was better than any show. He used to get so hot and tired! If only they would keep him! Then the strange call of the katy-dids attracted him, and he knew

nothing more until the morning sun shone into his face.

What strange noises! He ran to his window and looked out. The cows were lowing to be milked, the horses whinnying, turkey-cocks parading proudly in the sunshine, and roosters seeming to challenge them by their triumphant crows, while some energetic hens were proclaiming that they had provided fresh eggs for breakfast. The dew lay fresh and sparkling on shrubbery and flowers. It was a wonderful fairy-land. Then he saw old Hannibal, with a bucket on each arm, cross the orchard, and begin to milk one of the cows. He eagerly hurried on his clothes, and went down to see this strange sight. He carried in one of the foaming buckets, and, after washing, they sat down in the clean, sunny kitchen to a breakfast that made one hungry to look at it, much more so to smell the savory ham and potatoes and steaming coffee. And there was no limit in quantity. The half-starved boy ate as he had never eaten before. Last night he was shy, and feverish from the hot ride; now the long, quiet sleep in pure air, and the fresh, cool morning gave him appetite and enjoyment. After breakfast the cook directed him to scrape the dishes and put them together, and to give the scraps to the chickens. It amused him to see

how eagerly they ate, and that, abundant as their food supply was, they would leave it to quarrel over a coveted scrap. Next he helped the cook to wash and afterwards to put away the kitchen dishes.

Soon the family came down to breakfast, and Jim watched them furtively from the wide porch. There were flowers on the table, and the ladies wore pretty, simple morning-dresses, in light colors. How many there were!—five ladies, and the gentleman, and two boys. And when they sat down, how still they were! And the gentleman prayed! The poor waif had never before seen the Christian table consecrated by prayer. Only in a church had he heard people pray, and this invested the home with a mysterious sacredness.

But they did not stay quiet like church folks. How merry they were! The pleasant talk and ripples of laughter were new to him. He stole away, and sat down on the porch steps to think it all over.

“Surely this must be the best place in the world to live in. Could he ever learn to take care of a farm and earn money, and save it to buy a little piece of ground, and have a brown horse and a white cow, and chickens with such pretty top-knots?—yes, and trees full of apples

like these—bright red and yellow and green apples? O, if only they would keep him!"

Presently the two lads came out, bringing a large easy chair, which they placed under a spreading maple-tree near the house. Then Albert, the younger, brought a footstool and shawl, while Edward (a whole head taller than his brother) supported their aunt to the easy chair. A flood of gratitude rushed over Jim. All these delightful things he owed to Mrs. Gray. He sprang forward eagerly.

"I hope you had such a nice bed as I had, ma'am, and such a jolly breakfast! Do n't you feel better a'ready?"

The lady smiled kindly.

"Yes, it's very pleasant here. I shall feel better after I am rested. You like it, do n't you?"

"You bet, ma'am," said Jim, solemnly. "Once Bob Smith coaxed me into his Sunday-school, and the teacher told us a heap about a country where there's flowers and trees and a big river, and it's never cold or rainy, and she said good girls and boys went there when they died; and this must look just like it, only I do n't s'pose folks can eat good things after they're dead."

"No; but they will have every thing pleasant there. It will be as much better than this farm as this is better than Cherry Alley."

The sick lady lifted her eyes with a yearning look to the clear blue sky, where a few fleecy clouds floated, glorious in their sunlit purity ; no stain there ! The light only showed their perfect freedom from spot or gloom ; and the longing of her heart was not for the pure river of the water of life, or the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, but for the fulfillment of her prayer, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." The glory, the rest, and the saintly companionship of that wonderful world faded from her thoughts before the promise that "when He shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Jim watched her rapt look in wonder. When she turned to him again, he said, humbly :

"You know a sight about it, ma'am. How did you find it all out?"

"God gave us a wonderful book, Jim ; it is the Bible. It tells us about God and heaven ; it tells us how this world was made. God made it all, the mountains and rivers and trees ; and then God made a man and woman, and put them in a beautiful garden to live. He made all the birds and animals too, and said they should belong to this pair of human beings who were named Adam and Eve, because they were his children. He gave them all the fruit in the garden too ;

only one tree he said they must n't touch. He wanted them to learn to obey him."

"'Course they would n't touch that!" said Jim, loftily.

"Yes; they ate some of the fruit, and God saw it. He was in heaven; but he sees all we do, and he turned Adam and Eve out of the garden, as he said he would if they did n't obey him. They had to go out where the thorns and briers grew, and had to work hard and plant things to eat. God did n't mean people should be sick, and have trouble, and die; but sin brought it all here, and we shall never get quite rid of the trouble that sin brings until we get to heaven. There will be no sin there. But, Jim, if we want to get rid of sin, we must try every day, and ask Jesus to help us."

"Jesus!" repeated Jim, doubtfully.

"Yes; he is God's Son, and he will save us."

But just then Miss Ida appeared from the house.

"You are troubling yourself too much, Mary," she said. "Let Jim go with me to the garden to gather vegetables for dinner. I'll look after him."

A new world of wonders opened to the boy in the growth of plants,—potatoes dug out of the ground, beans gathered from high poles, large

yellow squashes lying on the straggling vines, scarlet tomatoes shining out from their dark green leaves, tall rows of green corn that seemed whispering as the air stirred them! He could scarcely confine his attention to his work while so many wonders beckoned him.

Then Miss Ida took him into the kitchen, and showed him how to assist her in preparing the vegetables for dinner.

“I will teach you all I can,” said the energetic young lady; “but you must try hard to learn. Your head and your hands must earn your living.”

W.

MISS GRACE CHARLTON, the only daughter, sat in her pleasant room, stitching away at a suit of clothes belonging to her brother Albert, that she had cut smaller for ragged Jim. The work would be a success; for she had been able to cut away all the holes, and had reserved pieces to double the thin places. Her heart and lips sang together for joy at having even this small work to do for the Master, to whom she hoped to devote her life.

The new clothes would fit Jim for a place, and would stimulate him to overcome the evil habits that had suited his rags and dirt. She thought of him as taking step after step onward and upward, until he stood in the ranks of workers for humanity. How many great and good men of the earth had been lifted up from as deep degradation! And it might be her privilege to teach and help him. All day long she toiled at the renovated clothes, and before tea-time had the satisfaction of carrying them down, completely finished. The work was praised and admired; then Mrs. Gray said, pleadingly: "Now, Edward,

since Grace has been so good to me, may I not ask as much of you? I would like to have you take your pony, and inquire among the best farmers for a place for Jim."

"Why, auntie, I thought you meant to keep him," replied the boy.

"My dear, it would not be I but your father who would keep him. I have no right to lay the burden on him. But I do feel responsible for the poor child, and you will do me a great favor if you find him a home where he can unlearn Cherry Alley."

"I'll try hard, auntie; but some of these farmers are probably as bad; only the good people are worth asking."

For two or three days Edward rode from farm to farm, appealing to the kind charity of the farmers, and representing the wisdom of training up a farm servant.

"Why don't your pa train him for your own farm?" asked a heavy, round-faced man, who seemed to consider the question a good joke.

"Because he has Albert and me," answered the young man.

"O shoo, now!" was the reply. "You'll never settle down on the farm; you'll go to the city when your time's out, and be a lawyer or a doctor, or run for some office."

“Never!” said Edward. “I’ll not leave the farm while father will keep me on it. It’s the best work in the world—next to one. Good morning!” and he rode rapidly away.

Grace had trimmed Jim’s hair, and given him many hints about manner. The strip of white muslin at his throat was a constant pleasure. Grace had hung a small mirror in his room, with a brush and comb beside it, and it was a delight to him to go there often during the day, that he might see that the collar was in place, and the beautiful parting that she had made and taught him to keep in order. For the first time in his life he carried a handkerchief, and always a corner appeared above the jacket pocket. The daily bath, the nice room and handsome clothes, the refined speech and manner of all about him (for no rudeness or coarseness was allowed in Mrs. Charlton’s kitchen),—all these were reflected in the boy’s manner and speech. He held himself erect, and carefully imitated any peculiarity of the young gentlemen. Mrs. Gray felt that any farmer would probably be pleased with the boy’s appearance; but again and again Edward came home to report failure.

He had posted placards in the village, requesting any one willing to take the boy to call or write to his father; but only one farmer was

willing to take him, and there he would find no Bible, no Sabbath, and no good influence or teaching. Mrs. Gray had written at once to the Bible-reader whose district comprised Cherry Alley. She knew the good woman well, and was sure she would thoroughly investigate the case. Now her answer came. Jim's last story was true. The mother had been a decent woman, and cared for her boy, until the father threw upon her the terrible burden of his own helplessness and cruelty. Hunger, abuse, and hopelessness had ruined her health, and the flood only hastened the end.

No one remained to claim Jim ; for the father was still in the work-house, and would be no fit custodian of the boy when he came out. Mrs. Gray could send him up and have him placed in the House of Refuge as a vagrant. She would attend to the case herself.

There was one encouraging feature : his maternal grandmother had been a woman of prayer. For three years of Jim's life had she offered earnest daily prayer for him.

Tears were shed over the good woman's letter, and many petitions for guidance went up from the hearts longing to do good, yet foreseeing many difficulties, and dreading the responsibility of another immortal soul.

Again Grace sat in her own room alone; but her hands were empty. She was working at something harder than the heavy cloth—at a question of duty. She knew that her aunt's motive in bringing Jim to the house had been the hope of his spiritual good. Ever since she united with the Church she had the same desire to gather sheaves for the Master. Any toil seemed better than failure to do his will; but if this proved to be his will, it would require a heavy sacrifice.

Her father had promised to buy her a new piano in the Autumn when the crops were sold. No one had suggested it to her, but she knew that if she gave up the piano it would more than pay the expense of feeding and clothing Jim for two years. She would teach him herself, and at the end of two years his work would be worth his keeping, if he proved faithful and industrious. She would train him so carefully, of course she *would not fail*. But—could she give up the piano? They had only her mother's old one; all the children had drummed on it when little, and now her favorite pieces were spoiled by its jingle and harshness.

The new piano was the only thing that she *could not* give up. She had already chosen it, and the salesman had urged her to take it on

payments ; but it was one of the peace-preserving rules of the Charlton farm-house that no debt should be incurred. She might wear her old clothes ; but that would save only a little. The late Spring and cold rains had made the crops light ; she could not ask her father to do both. So, alone and unaided, she fought out a battle of which no one dreamed, in which self-love and pleasure opposed duty. Not selfishness, nor luxury, nor worldliness ; it would have been quite right for her to enjoy the new piano ; but this seemed a higher duty, and she must choose between them. She knew that to many it might not seem a duty ; but she would not disregard the faintest whisper of conscience, and so discourage its faithful monitions. But she knew where to find light and direction : "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye." She had asked and trusted, and the promised help came.

"Father," she said that evening, as they sat on the pleasant porch, after Jim had gone to bed, "if I do without the new piano for two years, would you be willing to keep Jim ? Would that pay you his cost?"

"Yes, it would pay. But why do you want me to keep him, and how could you do without the piano that was to make you perfectly happy ?"

“ Yes, I know, father ; but—that twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew ! And Jim was a stranger, and naked, and hungry, and thirsty, and half sick when you took him in. You know it says, ‘ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.’ ”

For a long time no one spoke. Then the father took Grace on his knee, and laid her head on his bosom, as he had held her when a child. His loving kisses sealed the compact. Henceforth Jim Mason was to them all Christ’s waif, to be taught and trained for his service, more than for any benefit he might be to the Charlton farm.

Sabbath dawned bright and clear, only a few light fleecy clouds to add beauty to a sky blue as Italy boasts. A hush, a sense of rest and peace lay upon the farm.

After breakfast Grace saw that Jim was neat, and gave him a pretty Bible with his name written in it. “ Bring it with you,” she said ; and, with Albert and Edward, they followed Miss Ida along a cool woodland path to the pretty church. How clean it seemed ! All the windows were open, and the large maple-trees near it tossed their boughs in the fresh breeze, and made graceful, dancing shadows on the wall of the church. They had no school-rooms, except a small one for

the infant class. After the opening exercises, the teachers led their pupils to different parts of the church, that they might not disturb each other; and Grace asked the superintendent where she should place Jim. He looked over the room doubtfully.

"In the infant class for to-day; but that will be introducing an untrained element. Miss Grace, you have been in the Bible class for three years."

"Which implies—what?" she asked.

"That you should be graduated. Two families not Romish, nor any thing, moved into the hollow near the saw-mill some weeks ago, and I've been hoping our good people would try to get the children (if not the parents) to church and Sabbath-school. You have now the nucleus for such a class. May I write their names for you?"

When Grace led Jim to his place, she sat down to watch him, and to study this new phase of duty. Evidently it would be better for him to be in a small class, only the singing interested him. Both teacher and assistant were too busy to watch him, and temptations to mischief were numerous.

The short service over, they went into church, and the boy, seated near Miss Grace, imitated her attention. The walk home through the woods

and a good dinner, prepared the day before, inclined them to rest. Edward took his library-book, and read aloud to all who chose to listen ; Hannibal and the boys lay on the grass under a spreading walnut-tree ; the cook drew Mrs. Gray's chair near, and then sat down on a rustic seat to enjoy what was to her and Hannibal the pleasantest part of the day. They always took turns in going to Church ; but many of the sermons were for the faithful sheep rather than for the untaught lambs, and Edward always selected the book to suit his audience ; this was his mission-work.

Next came a stroll through the orchard or by the beautiful creek. At five the large bell recalled the wanderers to Miss Catharine's Bible-class. Here the lesson for the next Sabbath was studied and made interesting, and the verses to be committed to memory explained. Next came tea, always with some delicacy in honor of the day, and one warm dish to compensate for the cold dinner.

After tea, which was taken at the same time in kitchen and dining-room, all assembled in the pleasant parlor. Grace took her seat at the piano, and led in some familiar hymn, in which even Hannibal joined. A well-selected passage of Scripture was read by Miss Ida or her sister, and Mr. Charlton closed the pleasant service with a

short, simple prayer. This ended Jim's first real Sabbath.

Miss Ida and Grace went, on Monday afternoon, to find scholars for a new class in Sabbath-school. The new-comers were, as the superintendent described them, "not any thing." They had not even taken the trouble to clean the cottages or to make themselves comfortable in them. Rich in children, they were too indolent or too ignorant of the first principles of successful industry to be any thing but poor, ragged, repulsive objects of pity; and yet pity would be wasted on them, and still more would charity. Cumberers of the ground as such people are, they yet find pleasure in a lazy animal existence. Sunshine, food, and ease give more actual enjoyment to them than to earnest workers, whose duties fill their thoughts.

Could communists carry out the exact division of property that they fancy would right the world's wrongs, such people would not even make themselves clean and comfortable with their share of money; far less would they try to elevate and educate their children. All would soon be spent on sensual pleasures and the acquisition of new vices.

It is one of the problems of our day, "How shall we reach the masses?" Dr. Cuyler says:

“In God’s sight there is no such thing as the masses. God sees only individuals, every one unlike every other, and every one the possessor of an immortal soul. ‘Ye shall be gathered one by one,’ was the declaration made to God’s people in the olden time.” These people will not come to our churches; we must carry the Gospel to them. “Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.” Faithfully our friends tried to sow the good seed; and the little baskets of fruit and cakes and Scripture cards they carried prepared the way for them.

The mothers promised to wash and mend the children’s clothes, and to have them ready, with clean faces, next Sabbath morning, when Grace would call. Nor did they disappoint her. She took great care to interest them in Bible stories, and to teach them important truths in texts or verses of hymns, committed to memory, and repeated each Sabbath, so as to be a permanent possession. The novelty of the lessons, and Grace’s sunny, kind manner attracted them, and for years they remained under her care, giving her the unusual privilege of seeing the seed she had sown spring up and grow—slowly and scant, indeed—but good seed, giving hope of fruit some day.

III.

IM had now regular morning and evening tasks,—the care of chickens, hunting eggs in the large barn, where they were often hidden away in the straw and hay; gathering fruit and vegetables, and helping prepare them for cooking; sweeping the large porch, etc. When the sun grew too hot for out-door work, Miss Catharine gave him short lessons.

Edward and Albert studied with her when not needed on the farm; but at busy times they worked all day long with their father. In Winter they had full school hours, and pursued their studies regularly. Grace took only an hour each day for improving reading. She now relieved her mother of much of the sewing, and with Miss Ida's instructions, was fast becoming an artist in dress-making. Each one had a regular task, and as no one else was allowed to do it for them, they learned to be faithful and reliable.

But all this quiet harmony was disturbed by the arrival of several laborers with a machine for cutting the wheat. This, though it occupied two days, did not disturb them as the threshers did.

Their custom is to go through a neighborhood, each family waiting its turn. For days they had heard the shrill sound of the steam-engine; but no one knew when to expect them. One morning a boy brought word that they would be at Mr. Charlton's that afternoon. Edward took a light wagon, and brought supplies from the village—piles of bread, whole hams, cheese, canned meats, and sugar and coffee in large quantities; while the cook made doughnuts and pies—food that the family never ate, but that is considered indispensable by that class of workers. Just at nightfall they drove to the barn—three large wagons full of the heavy machinery, and fifteen men to lift, adjust, and manage it.

But it seemed impossible for them to do any thing without oaths. It is strange that this special work, necessary and useful as it is, should be left in the hands of the most degraded men.

Mr. Charlton allowed none of the family to go near them. They slept on piles of straw in the large barn; but it was necessary to give them their meals in the kitchen, although the decent servants would not eat with them.

Fortunately the torment lasted but a day; but that was long enough thoroughly to demoralize Jim. He slipped away to watch the working of the machinery, begged a cigar of one man and a

drink of whisky of another, and was just able to stagger to his bed, when Mr. Charlton discovered him and sent him there. But when the boy heard them blow off steam at the close of their work that evening, he went to his window and saw the teams wind slowly out with a longing to be among them, to enjoy the old excitements, to plunge into the old sins. Alas! young as he was, they already held him with strong chains. The peace, the comfort, and luxury of the farm-house seemed dull to him beside what he thought the free, jolly life of these wicked men.

How little power have education and culture over inborn sins, sometimes inherited and intensified through many generations! How useless would all our efforts to reform and save the lost prove without the omnipotent aid of the Spirit!

The next day Jim's head ached terribly, and he could not leave his bed, while those who had learned to feel a deep interest in him were almost hopeless of saving him, and questioned whether it would not be better to relinquish the care of him to some institution where rigid rules and close watching would prevent a similar fall.

They gathered on the porch that evening to consult together as to what course would best help the poor child. Some one spoke of the disadvantages necessarily incident to a large insti-

tution—the meeting together at times, when one could corrupt another; especially the want of personal influence and of that strongest agent for good, the power of love.

Grace spoke next: “ You know, father, that the Bible says, ‘ He setteth the solitary in families.’ Had n’t we better try Jim awhile longer? He ’s such a little fellow !”

Mr. Charlton brought out a copy of Whittier’s poems, and read Grace her answer:

“ THE ROBIN.

“ My old Welsh neighbor over the way
Crept slowly out in the sun of Spring,
Pushed from her ears the locks of gray,
And listened to hear the robin sing.

Her grandson, playing at marbles, stopped,
And, cruel in sport as boys will be,
Tossed a stone at the bird, who hopped
From bough to bough in the apple-tree.

“ Nay ! ” said the grandmother, ‘ have you not heard,
My poor, bad boy ! of the fiery pit,
And how, drop by drop, this merciful bird
Carries the water that quenches it ?

He brings cool dew in his little bill,
And lets it fall on the souls of sin :
You can see the mark on his red breast still
Of fires that scorch as he drops it in.

My poor brown rhuddyn ! my breast-burned bird,
Singing so sweetly from limb to limb,

Very dear to the heart of our Lord
Is he who pities the lost like him !'

'Amen !' I said to the beautiful myth ;
'Sing, bird of God, in my heart as well :
Each good thought is a drop wherewith
To cool and lessen the fires of hell.

Prayers of love like rain-drops fall,
Tears of pity are cooling dew,
And dear to the heart of our Lord are all
Who suffer like him in the good they do !'"

Mr. Charlton took Jim under the favorite walnut-tree next day, and told him how anxious they all were that he should grow into a good, useful man ; then his life would be a happy one. He pictured to the boy's comprehension the life beyond, and the freeness with which it is promised to those who love and follow Christ. Then he told him the true character of the threshers, and that their present pleasure was all they were sure of ; that they had no hope for this life or the next ; and asked him to choose for himself which was best.

Then he explained to him that the path that he had just chosen was a narrow one, broad enough for the whole world, yet not broad enough for any indulged sin.

"I will not ask you to promise me that you will not again touch cigars or whisky or those vile picture-papers that the men gave you—a

promise is a solemn thing ; but I am going to trust you, Jim. If I find that you do n't deceive or disobey me, this shall be your home ; but if you do n't do right here, I must place you in the House of Refuge."

Several weeks passed quietly, and Jim's conduct had been so good that they ceased to feel anxious about him, when temptation came to the waif in an unexpected shape.

A handsome young gentleman, an old friend of the family, came to visit at the Charlton farm. When a boy he lived near them, and he and Miss Ida had been playmates ; but at twenty he was taken into business by his uncle, a New York merchant. Short, occasional visits he had made them in the interval ; but now he was to spend his month of vacation with them, and both families understood that it was in expectation of securing Ida for his wife, and making arrangements for their marriage.

I have not attempted to describe Ida, because, attractive as she was, her nobility of character was her chief charm, and that is not told in words, but in deeds. You must yourself gather it from our story.

But this was not her charm to Arthur Montgomery. It was as completely lost upon him as a fine painting upon a blind man. He loved her

for her vivacity and brightness; for the rich chestnut hair, whose abundance was a wonder to strangers; for the full, brilliant hazel eyes, the clear skin glowing with health, the quick, graceful movements, that reminded him of a bird's motion. And she—it was the tie of old associations, the link with all childhood's sunny memories, the day-dreams she had dreamed of what her lover should be and of what Arthur had become, that she loved, not the real Arthur Montgomery. As to all knowledge of the man himself, of his real character and habits, she also was blind.

True they had corresponded regularly, and his letters had been full of interest—descriptions of lectures or singers, his idea of new books such as she read, of New York life such as she would be interested in, occasionally of some celebrated preacher; in fact, he had taken great pains to make the letters proper.

Often, when he sat down to write to her on Sabbath morning the letter that was carefully dated for Monday and mailed Monday evening, he was compelled to wrap his head in a wet towel and to groan with pain between his lively sentences. But Saturday night was his only free night, the only night he dared spend in revelry without fear of detection. This he escaped

in his large boarding-house, and his uncle thought him only fond of society and pleasure while his feet were already on the fearful incline, up which there is so seldom power to return.

IV.

T was impossible not to like the gay, sunny-hearted young man; but Ida gradually discovered that on all vital points his opinions had changed since they parted; for five years they had been traveling in diametrically opposite directions. The day after his arrival, as they were starting for a stroll in the woods, Arthur asked:

“What would you say, Miss Ida, if I requested permission to smoke a cigar?”

“I can not imagine what I should say,” she replied, “as I would not be willing to consider the possibility of your offering me such an insult.”

“Insult! Why, I have smoked while walking with young ladies in the streets of New York, and they did not object to it,” said the young man, incautiously.

“Ladies?” queried the high-spirited girl.

“Yes; stylish, elegant, wealthy ladies,” said Arthur, curtly; then, after a moment: “I do not wonder that you are surprised at some of the customs of modern society, they are so unlike those of our childhood; but as you become familiar with

them you will see that they allow larger liberty to woman as well as man. When you make me a home, it will be a handsome one, with servants to relieve you of all labor. You will go out and receive company freely ; all your time will be yours for enjoyment. During business hours I shall be obliged to be at the store ; but you will soon find friends to go out with you. I shall always be at home by five, and after our six o'clock dinner I will take you everywhere—to receptions, the opera, the theater. This quiet farmhouse is no place for you. You will enjoy society, and shine in it."

Still Ida walked beside him in silence, although her face flushed and her lip quivered.

"Tell me, Ida, how have I offended you?" he pleaded. "All my plans have been made for your happiness."

"Are you judging me by your own tastes when you plan for such a round of gayety? Would the pursuit of pleasure make *you* happy? Are you not the same innocent Arthur to whom I pledged myself? I have always fancied a quiet home, with books, music, simple pleasures, and time to enjoy our own society, superior church privileges, and opportunities of influence for good and of active usefulness. Would not these make you happy?"

"Of course, I could be happy anywhere with you," he said warmly.

"But without these pleasures you had planned, without indulging in what are called the small vices of society? Answer me truly, Arthur; for not to know the truth now might wreck the happiness of both."

They sat down on a rustic seat, and for a long time both were silent. Ida's heart trembled for the bright future that seemed slipping from her hope; but her silent prayer was for light and guidance. At last he spoke:

"Ida dear, when you live for awhile in New York you will see how necessary society is to happiness. There are no simple pleasures there. Show and glitter and excitement make the life of all who have means to enjoy them. If I were a poor man I would not take you there; but since I can offer you the best the metropolis affords, why should you not enjoy it? You will go nowhere that you will not meet clergymen and their families. The majority of society people are Church members. You can select your church and have a handsome pew, and I will accompany you whenever you wish to go. Your pastor will be an educated, cultivated gentleman—quite different from any thing you have known here—and he will be one of your guests. All society

pays homage to religion. During Lent there will be no gay parties or entertainments, and the most elegant ladies fast and go in mourning to all the Church services on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Yes, you will find religion more honored and more openly professed than in the country."

Something of Bunyan's idea of religion walking in silver slippers floated through Ida's mind, but she could not answer the sophistry of his appeal.

"I can not quite understand this, Arthur; it is new to me. But I think I never could enjoy the life you describe. If you could not be happy in my simple way, pray tell me so; do not leave me to learn by slow degrees what you must already know. 'How can two walk together except they be agreed?'"

"Very wisely said! Let us agree to drop this painful discussion, and enjoy our walk. See, yonder is the very tree we used to call our castle. Do you recollect we read 'Robinson Crusoe' there one holiday, and pretended afterward that we were shipwrecked mariners, and had climbed our tree to be safe from savages and wild animals?"

"Those were happy times. I wish we might go back to them," she said.

"What! you to pinafores and short hair and

‘Robinson Crusoe?’ Then I thought you the nicest girl in the world, as good a playmate as a boy; but since then I have placed you on a pinnacle—somewhere between man and the angels.’

“Alas! ‘poor, weak, frail human nature’ can not sustain itself on such unnatural heights. When you find that I am only a woman, with no trace of angelhood, you will feel yourself cheated.”

“That is not my fear; it is only that I may not be able to persuade you down to my level.”

“Then come up to mine.”

“What! the pinnacle? You just said that it was unnatural.”

“But I am not there; I am on a plain, earthly path—the path of present duties. I could not be content to sit down on the earth and amuse myself with the flowers about me, any more than I could rest idly, like St. Simeon Stylites, on a pillar, for your adoration. Come and walk with me, Arthur; for the path of duty is always safe, and leads homeward.”

“Well, a home with you is all I want,” he said.

“And my great longing, my earnest hope, is for the eternal home. Do not let us miss that. That loss, and the failure to do good, are the only real failures of life.”

"It seems so to you now; but when you really enter life you will find that many other things have their relative value."

"Enter life! Why, I have been intensely alive ever since I can remember. This farm contents me; and it is well, since so many millions of people must continue to exist outside of New York City. Think how small Manhattan Island is! Must she give tone and laws to the wide world? But for you, this peaceful life would hold all I ask."

"It would not content me," he said. "I love the stir and excitement of city life, the close contests, the deep interest of business. A man can be content only when his powers are tasked to the utmost."

"Then, you need your vacation. Try, now, to enjoy it. See how the setting sun glorifies our path, and it leads straight toward the golden and rosy clouds. Do you remember the evening we tried to reach the end of the rainbow for the pot of gold?"

"And got lost. You were very brave, I recollect, although you were wet and hungry before they found us. Well, we have found the pot of gold, and in a far easier way."

A week passed in drives and horseback rides, to revisit old haunts, and each day was so full

of pleasure that the subject of discussion was not resumed. Then one of Arthur's schoolmates called, and took him home for a short visit. Afterward the two friends would visit Mr. Montgomery's brother, whose farm lay about ten miles away from the railroad.

A few days after Arthur left, a friend of Albert's came to spend the day. As they sat on the porch after dinner, he said to Miss Ida :

"I got acquainted with your friend, Mr. Montgomery, at the fair."

"Mr. Montgomery there!" she exclaimed.

"O yes! He was there two days. You see, he bet on the brown horse, and it won. Father said he made several hundred dollars."

"Why," exclaimed Albert, "I don't believe he'd do that! Father says betting is stealing; you just get something for nothing. He wouldn't go to the fair. None of our family ever go, because there is so much raffling and gambling there."

"Some of the ministers went," said the boy; "I saw them."

Ida answered :

"Mr. Charlton says that these county fairs were once very useful to farmers, as they could compare their cattle and crops and learn the best ways of farming. Their families seldom visited

or traveled then; so they all went to the fair, met old friends, and compared ways of house-keeping. Probably these good ministers did not know how much harm these fairs now do. I know that free tickets of admission were sent to them all, and that our minister never goes."

When Arthur returned he brought his friend, with fishing-rods and tackle, for a day's sport. Jim begged the privilege of carrying their lunch. This he was not strong enough to do, but was allowed to carry his own and go with them to dig bait.

The gentlemen came back at tea-time with their strings of fish; but Jim was not with them, and they knew nothing of him, except that he had waited on them nicely until after lunch, when he suddenly disappeared.

Late in the evening he slipped into the shed, and was creeping up-stairs, when Mr. Charlton, who had been watching for him, brought him to the light. A glance showed that Jim had again fallen under the power of his enemy. His eyes were heavy and bloodshot, and his clothes, so neat and clean in the morning, showed that he had lain on the wet ground until the cool dew had restored his senses. Mr. Charlton gave the poor fellow a glass of water, and sent him at once to bed. Fortunately no one had seen Jim, and the kind

father kept this new trouble to himself. The next morning he took the boy out to the barn, and directed him to tell his story, but to be careful to tell the exact truth, if he wished to be forgiven and trusted again.

After close questioning, these seemed to be the facts: The young gentlemen had a flat, leather-covered flask, from which they drank occasionally. After lunch, as it was warm, they took off their coats, hung them on a low tree, and lay down in the shade to rest. Jim had noticed that Mr. Montgomery kept the flask in the breast-pocket of his coat, and when the gentlemen seemed to be asleep he cautiously took a drink. It seemed like fire; but he liked it, and twice went back for more. Then his head was dizzy, and he crept away under some bushes, and slept until the stars were shining; and he had hard work to find his way home, guided only by the lights in the upper part of the house.

There was more sorrow in this than Jim had brought; but Mr. Charlton tried to put it aside for the present duty of helping this poor waif.

“ You remember your father, Jim?” he said.

“ O yes, sir; he used to beat me so.”

“ Well, you are going to be just like him.”

“ I would n’t want to be that. I’d rather be like Mr. Arthur.”

Mr. Charlton winced.

"Jim, do you think I 'll ever beat my family and smash things up, as your father did?"

"Why, no, sir; you 're a gentleman."

"But that would not prevent my doing it. Many men who are called gentlemen break up their homes and ruin their lives, as your father did. No; it is because I do not love whisky, and I do love God. He tells us in the Bible that we must not drink wine or strong liquors, and that no drunkard can go to heaven. Jim, you must choose for yourself. Either you can drink whisky when you can get it, and be a drunkard like your father, or try to be good and go to heaven when you die, like your grandmother. Stay here, and think about it awhile."

When Mr. Charlton entered the house he found, to his great relief, that whatever it was his duty to say to Miss Ida must be deferred. The young people were just starting on an excursion that would occupy the whole day. The next morning other guests came, and when they left in the afternoon Ida and Arthur accompaied them part of the way on horseback. As they entered the woods on their return they saw Jim hurrying toward the village. They stopped so as to watch him; but as soon as he saw them he turned back, and they rode rapidly on and intercepted him.

"Where were you going, Jim?" asked the lady.

"Just a piece along here." But his face betrayed him.

Mr. Montgomery dismounted, and, taking hold of the boy, proceeded to examine his full pockets. Two eggs from each jacket pocket, four from each trowsers pocket—twelve eggs lay on the grass.

"What were you going to do with them, Jim?"

"Get some cigars," said Jim, stoutly. "Mr. Arthur smokes 'em. I wa' n't goin' for whisky. That I drinked out o' his leather bottle made my head ache awful; and Mr. Charlton says if I drink wine and whisky I can't get to heaven."

"Satan reproving sin," said the young man, sneeringly. "You say you stole from me, and now we catch you stealing eggs. Thieves do n't go to heaven."

"Give the eggs to Margaret, and then go to your own room. I must tell Mr. Charlton of this," said Miss Ida.

They rode on in silence; then Arthur said:

"Little imp! I wonder Mr. Charlton keeps him."

"Evidently it is not for his own ease and pleasure," replied the lady.

"What hope can he have of reforming him? He is too far gone."

“At ten!” exclaimed Miss Ida. “If he were twenty, now, one might despair.”

“But the material is hopeless.”

“Not altogether. His father was a drunkard, but the mother was a decent, hard-working woman, and the grandmother unusually good.”

“You seem to be interested only in the degraded classes, Ida. When I ask you to make me a home that shall be a refuge from temptation, and where any small vices I have acquired would drop off from me, as dead leaves before the new growths of Spring, you hesitate. Am I less interesting or less hopeful material than Jim?”

“You differ widely in this: the ignorant child has never been taught what is right, and your parents led you in the right way for twenty years. I could teach you nothing that you do not already know.”

“But your presence with me, your daily influence. You would be my guardian angel.”

“My influence will never be greater than it now is. If you will not turn away from all evil for the sake of winning me, what influence would I possess when won?”

Miss Catharine met them at the door.

“How pale you look, Ida! You have tired yourself out. Go and lie down until tea-time,” she said, lovingly.

“Where is Howard? I must see him first.”

“Down in the lower cornfield. It’s too far for you to go, and he said he’d be there all the afternoon.”

“Well, it’s only about Jim. I sent him to his room. You might see that he has some plain supper; but he’d better stay there until I’ve told Howard about him.”

It was a cool evening, such as often follows a warm day in August, and the family gathered about the open wood-fire in the parlor; but even its glow and sparkle did not enliven them. Ida and Mr. Charlton were absorbed in anxious thought, and the rest missed their usual cheerfulness. During one of the long silences, Edward brought a book from the library table, where he had been reading.

“As you are not talking, may I read you a poem here? I want your opinion of it.”

All assented gladly, and he read :

“THE CROSS IN THE PLAN.

“I heard of a quaint old story
In a far-away Eastern land,
Of a mosque of Mohammed that rises
Not far from the sloping strand.

There, bowed in his chains, lay a captive,
Who had come from a northern town,
Where the sun that runs low in the Winter
Shines cold on the frozen ground.

Rare powers he had at building;
For the forest, so grand and wild,
He could shape again in the marble,—
Trunk, foliage, arch, and aisle.

They offered the slave his freedom,
With a pass to the Northern land,
If a mosque to Mohammed he builded,
To tower above the strand.

He planned in the stone right grandly,
And he wrought for his life—that man!
But they saw in the beautiful outline
The cross he had dared to plan.

They mockingly gave the ransom:
Out of fetters his soul was sent,
From the land of this fiery Summer;
But death was the way he went.

He left for us all a lesson:
To whatever you put your hand,
Be it bearing, or doing, or waiting,
The cross let it mark the plan.

In patient endurance be Christ-like,
In your trials and pains and loss,
That all who look at your living
May see in your life the Cross."

—EDWARD BOND.

"I wondered," said Edward, after reading it, "whether the mere shape of the cross could pay for losing his life; and yet it was a brave thing to do."

"It was the deed of a fanatic, an enthusiast, of course. It cost him his life, and accomplished nothing," exclaimed Arthur. "Had he been a

practical man, he would have gone back to his friends and home."

"Now, I think he was a remarkably practical man," said Mr. Charlton. "He knew that life is short, and that God would reward, through endless ages, this loving desire to honor him."

"Then you would have a man live for the future instead of the present."

"They who live most truly for the next world make the most of this," said Mr. Charlton.

"They certainly do not make the most money."

"I do not grant that making money is the great object of life; but the Bible says, 'The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.' The promises of needed food and constant care are to God's people. You know how many Christian men have accumulated large fortunes,—Amos Lawrence, of Boston, who yet spent more time in doing good than in making money; and Johns Hopkins, who gave to the university he founded and that bears his name, and to other benevolent purposes, eight millions of dollars, all made on Christian principles."

"But imagine a man attempting to make a large fortune in New York on the principle of the Golden Rule! He would be laughed at for his want of common sense."

"And yet it has been wisely said by some

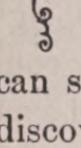
writer, ““ Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you,” may be called the religion of common sense, since it would promote the happiness of the right-doer, and should the world act upon the maxim, would soon bring the millennium for which humanity sighs.’ But if you claim that money is the chief end, you differ with many wise men and philosophers, who live for higher aims. Hamilton says, ‘The true object of life is to become perfect yourself.’ Most men, in seeking wealth, expect in that way to secure happiness; but Burns says :

‘Happiness must have its seat
And center—in the breast.’”

V.

S they parted for the night Ida asked Mr. Charlton, "When did you see Jim?"

 "Not since this morning," he replied.
"Is he lost?"

 "Not bodily," she said; "but if you can spare the time, I would like to tell you of a discovery we made this afternoon."

But when they were quite alone all self-control forsook her, and she burst into a violent fit of weeping. Her brother waited a few moments, and then said tenderly :

"Let me relieve you of part of the story. Jim confessed to me his drinking liquor from a flask in Arthur's pocket the day they went fishing; but may not Foster have brought it? We have nothing against him but circumstantial evidence, and that rests only on the word of a boy who has never learned to speak the truth."

"But his whole views of life are changed. He is perfectly fascinated with New York society and pleasures. He tries to persuade me that my influence might lead him aright. But how could it be so there, where temptations surround him,

and old associates would appeal as strongly to his pride as my love could appeal to his affection and desire for my happiness? And here, alas! Jim's story is true. Arthur carries brandy and the aroma of cigars on his breath. Sometimes, when he is talking earnestly and comes near, I can hardly endure it. He is so changed—so changed!"

Mr. Charlton could say only this :

"Under these circumstances he has no right to press for an immediate answer. You could not be happy to marry while in such doubt; and you have no right, without full evidence, to reject entirely the love he has professed for years. You are safer to insist upon waiting a year longer than to accept him now. If he really loves you, he will struggle to overcome the faults that separate you. If he will not try to make himself worthier for your sake, this will show you that these faults have become habits too strong for you to break. My heart has ached for you ever since I heard Jim's story; but I would rather lay you in the grave, hard as that would be for me and for us all, than to see you the wife of a drunkard. But do not despair, dear sister; take this reprieve, try to throw off this sorrow, and improve Arthur's visit to learn all you can of his real self, apart from these habits that may be recent, and

that he may be able to cast off entirely. We will pray for guidance, and I am sure it will be given you."

Ida's trust in Providence and her hopeful nature conquered her distress. She thanked her brother warmly, and then told him about Jim and the eggs.

"Do n't let that trouble you," he said; "we had reason to expect it. I'll see him to-morrow morning. Now try to rest in the Fatherly care that watches the birds."

Soon, in childlike trust, all were sleeping.

It was now one of the seasons of rest which come more fully to the farmer than to any business man, since no cares or anxious plans disturb it. The hay was gathered into the barn in June. It had been cut and raked into heaps by machinery. Men riding on it accomplished in one day what once required more than a week of toil on foot. The large barn was crowded with the fragrant results, while three or four huge stacks in the open field gave the cattle opportunity to eat at will, and saved trouble to the farmer.

It had been a year of increase, and now they could understand how joyfully the Israelites of old obeyed God's command to keep the feast called in Exodus the feast of ingathering, and in Leviticus the feast of tabernacles.

Gratitude for the harvest, for rest from toil, blended with the gladness of reunion, when from all parts of their land the people assembled at Jerusalem for a week of social pleasure, begun and closed by Sabbaths of thanksgiving to God in his temple, when large thank-offerings were made to the Giver of the harvest. Every Israelite at Jerusalem and in its vicinity had made full preparation for the feast. Their houses had been put in festal order and arranged for many guests. Bread had been baked in large quantities; the finest fruits had been arranged and the most delicate dishes prepared, and while every path and road was full of eager travelers, in their best attire, hastening to the beloved city, the men went out and gathered "boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees and willows of the brook," that they might fulfill the pleasant command, "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days, and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days."

The night before this first Sabbath the city was full of happy faces, booths covered the house-tops and were spread in the courts; far as the eye could reach, the hills around Jerusalem were dotted with booths and bright with happy children. Everywhere old friends and the stranger were equally welcomed; for this was a feast unto

the **Lord**, and the innocent gladness of his people is as acceptable to him who gave us our powers of enjoyment and the good in which we rejoice as is the solemn convocation and prayer.

From this command down to St. Paul's reiterated "Rejoice in the **Lord**," the Bible is full of commands to rejoice; yet in our blindness we imagine that we are honoring our God—the loving, the merciful, the glorious God—when we walk sadly before him.

In this spirit of grateful gladness Mr. Charlton's family spent whole days in the woods, and made excursions to points of interest. One of these was to visit a large Indian mound several miles distant.

They were curious to see whether the mound-builders had thrown them up laboriously, to use as burial-places, or whether the new theory was correct that they had been prepared as refuges from floods. Any structure of wood that they could have built would have been swept away by the mighty force of the waters; so those untaught savages had been endowed with the sagacity of the beaver, and in preparing a permanent refuge for themselves had left a memorial of their energy and wisdom to tax the wisdom of the explorer.

Many were the days that seemed completely

happy, and whose sunny memories remained to brighten sorrow and old age—pictures more durable and more capable of giving pleasure than any frescoes that art can paint.

Mr. Charlton appreciated the opportunity of giving Jim higher pleasures and happier memories than his dwarfed, sad life had known, and took pains that he should enter fully into the enjoyment of each day of pleasure. Some writer quotes from Charles Kingsley: “Try, if you can, not to pass a day without either reading a beautiful poem, or hearing a sweet song, or seeing a beautiful picture;” and adds: “It is more blessed to give than to receive, we would say. Still more should we try not to pass a day without doing some beautiful deed of love, without saying some sweet word of kindness, however quiet and unostentatious, or without letting others see the beautiful picture of a consistent character. So shall we be writing poems for God and painting pictures for eternity.”

No allusion had again been made to any points of difference, and as the month of vacation drew near its close, Arthur entreated for a speedy marriage. Ida’s decision gave him pain, but did not excite his anger, as she had feared. During that month in a pure, real home, a Christian home, he had seen gradually the wide difference between

his own hopes and pleasures, his own motives and purposes, and those of Ida. Yet he honored and loved her more, and wished to be like her—wished, but failed to *will* and to *resolve*. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” “Whoso taketh not up his cross and followeth after me can not be my disciple.”

Five years of yielding to worldliness and selfish pleasure had weakened alike his power of resistance and his desire to resist. He could not promise himself that he would ever become worthy of her, and this feeling gave his manner a new humility. He submitted only because it was her will, but prayed her to remember that all his hopes of happiness rested in her; that with her he would mount upward to a higher life, as without her, his good angel, allied temptations would be too strong for him. When she spoke of the loving, omnipotent Father, ever ready to hear and to save, she felt that he listened coldly, and her heart rested only in prayer for the help he was too proud and too undecided to seek.

The Sabbath before he left, Mr. Charlton took him on a long, quiet stroll, and urged him, for his own sake and by the love they bore him, to consecrate his life to the holy purposes for which it was given. He told him that daily prayer

would be offered for him, but that no prayer would avail unless he himself desired it. God forces no man into his kingdom; only voluntary service is acceptable to him who freely gave his life for us.

Never had Arthur seemed so near the right path, and they parted with loving hopes of happier meeting.

September came, with its work of preparing the ground and sowing the Winter wheat. It seemed a strange thing to coax upward the delicate green blades, only to meet the Winter snow; but it shelters them from frost, and leaves them to welcome, with vivid coloring, the Spring sunshine. The frost that checked their upward growth gave them deep and strong rooting; the real and necessary growth had been out of sight, and would never have been attained in light and heat. The good seed of the kingdom has often flourished best under adversity and opposition, though in our weak faith we shrink from conflict, and would have it the Church acquiescent rather than the Church militant.

In the Autumn came the merry time of gathering in fruit—merrier to the gatherers than to those who prepared part of it for Winter use. The Winter apples were stored away for their own eating, to be a constant care in turning and

assorting, as decay in one affects all near it, as surely as bad habits in one pupil will corrupt a school.

Mr. Charlton would not have dared to take Jim into his family had his children been young and untrained. Here was his opportunity for service—that all the family influence would be for good. Was not this a part of what Christ intended when he said to his people, “Ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life?” Will the hidden taper continue to burn? Will the lamp whose rays guide no wanderer, lighten no darkness, be still fed with oil?

With the first frost Edward and Albert left their books, and, armed with sickles, joined their father and his men in cutting down the tall corn. This is left until frost, as it still grows and matures; but then it must be put under shelter to harden. They placed the severed stalks together like an Indian wigwam, but closer at the base, taking care that all the ears should be inside the stack, and bound them together strongly at the top. Thus secured, the whole can be left until it is convenient to husk and store it in the large corn-cribs—buildings placed on posts, so that mice and squirrels can not enter them. In New England, in primitive times, the corn was gathered into the barn, and the young people had a

husking frolic, in which they took sides, as in a spelling-match. But though Mr. Charlton's barn was more than twice the size of his house, it could not have held, in addition to his hay, the large corn-crop, such as the stony soil of New England never produces.

They raked up the dead leaves around the house, and used them for bedding cattle; but the crisp, frosty air gave the workers a fullness of life that Summer had lacked. The lads took up their studies with new interest; bright fires glowed steadily on the open hearths, and the sun's rays came freely through the large windows. Even Mrs. Gray enjoyed a short walk, that made the home-coming delightful. Young people often dread old age—the Winter of life, it is called—and yet to many it is their happiest time, full of gathered treasures of knowledge, of memories of a well-spent life, and of clear hopes of the brighter, more satisfying life beyond.

Dear young people, let me urge you so to use those valuable servants, your bodies, that they shall be able to continue to serve you while life lasts, that no decaying powers, no sharp pains may remind you bitterly of past carelessness—possibly, of past sin.

The large wood-house was already nearly full of well-seasoned wood; but, now that other work

was over, Mr. Charlton selected and marked all decaying or worthless trees and those that crowded the valuable timber, and watched while the wood-choppers felled them. To no one could he trust the care of his beloved and valuable woods. But that once done, they could be left to split and stack them for fuel, as they were paid by actual measure of their piled-up work. Now Mr. Charlton had leisure to visit the members of the Church in which he was an officer, to examine into any peculiar cases that might be laid before him, to minister to any sick, and especially to consider who among the poor of the district might safely be supplied with needed comforts, and who so preferred a life of indolent dependence that it would have done them harm to give any thing but work.

Hannibal and the team went on many errands of mercy. The nicely arranged piles of wood by the roadside and the abundance of farm comforts yielded their tithe to the needy and helpless. It was a new and great pleasure to Jim to go with him, and see the joy the timely gifts brought.

Thanksgiving passed, with its joyous service and varied home enjoyments. Already preparations for Christmas were begun. In their visits to the poor and the sick the ladies noticed the most pressing wants and the shape in which

cheering would best come. A part of Ida's memoranda would have read thus:

“For old Peter—a set of red flannel shirts.

“For Mrs. Whiting—a lithograph of ‘The Good Shepherd,’ to be hung at the foot of her bed Christmas eve, after she is asleep.

“For Johnny Brown—‘Mother Goose.’

“For Sandy—a coarse-print Bible.

“For Benny Snow—a nice pair of crutches.

“For Annie Clark—a paint-box and Bristol board.”

All were busy, and each had some secret. The day before Christmas Grace and Ida took the ponies and large sleigh, the boys carried out and stowed away parcels and baskets, and yet they came back in an hour or two to have it refilled. The baskets contained Mrs. Charlton's donation—a Christmas dinner for each deserving poor person in the village, and delicacies for each invalid.

“No use in your trying to play Santa Claus without bells,” remonstrated Albert; “each reindeer wears a string.”

But they had a motive in directing that the bells should not be put on.

Christmas eve the elders were up late, and the parlor door was found locked in the morning. It was always Mr. Charlton's custom to begin the day with the story of the first Christmas. Di-

rectly after the excellent breakfast of broiled chicken, muffins, and fruit, the servants took their seats in the dining-room, and Mr. Charlton first read the most joyful prophecies of the Prince and Savior who should redeem the world ; then a part of the second chapter of St. Luke, showing the lowly form in which he assumed our nature. Then all kneeled, and in a few earnest words he thanked our Father for this first Christmas gift, this best gift to man. He prayed that in gratitude they might present their souls and bodies to him, a reasonable service ; that they might so live that in heaven they should see Christ himself on his throne, wearing a body like ours, yet glorified, and there be able to thank him as they ought.

After the servants had breakfasted, the parlor door was thrown open, and all were summoned by a bell. No one was ever omitted in the gifts, and each one received some long-wished-for article, and wondered how the wish had been known.

There was one drawback to Ida's pleasure—one undesired gift—a fine solitaire diamond ring from Mr. Montgomery. His card bore only the request that she would wear it ; but to her it seemed an engagement-ring, and she could not put it on.

The sadness with which she showed it to Mr

Charlton—so unnatural for such a gift—made him rack his brain to devise some way of learning the exact truth about Arthur, that Ida's heart might not still be tossed in uncertainty.

VI.

BUT a way was already being prepared to relieve Ida's uncertainty. For two years Lizzie Warrener was her room-mate at Wesleyan College; she spent a vacation then at Mr. Charlton's, and they all loved her for her simplicity and quiet goodness. Directly after the girls were graduated Mr. Warrener removed with his family to New York, and the friends had not since met. When their pastor left in August, Lucy's brother had taken the place.

Paul Warrener had been a successful lawyer until a strong sense of duty drove him into the ministry; so, although thirty years of age, he had just finished his course in a theological seminary, and this was his first charge. His active life among men had been a great preparation for his work; all the new questions of the day interested him, and the truth he held had been thoroughly proved and tested with all the ability and acumen that his legal training had given him. We sometimes wonder at the number of successful lawyers who have entered

the ministry and who always bring to it unusual earnestness and consecration.

Is it that having learned to investigate and discover truth, they have found the highest to be contained in the Gospel? and that the strongest demand it makes upon those who accept it is—next to holiness of heart and life—obedience to our Savior's last command—“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?”

Benevolent work and practical questions of duty were full of interest to the young pastor. They enjoyed the freshness and earnestness of his sermons; and his desire to do good drew them together in the bonds of a common interest. The walk to the Charlton farm was a pleasant relaxation to the student; he found there a delightful home, while Mr. Charlton's intimate knowledge of the people of his charge and of their special spiritual needs, was a great help to Mr. Warrener.

His praises of the family awakened the slumbering friendship, and Lucy wrote to Ida urging her to visit her at once and stay as long as possible. Here was the very opportunity that Mr. Charlton could have wished, and he advised Ida to accept it for any time when she could be ready. He would go with her and take Grace for her

first sight of New York; they would stay only for a week or two, but some escort could easily be found as far as Cincinnati when Ida chose to return. It was decided that each should buy a street dress and wrap as soon as possible after reaching New York, and the numerous trifles—bonnets, gloves, etc.—that require so little attention in the country and assume such importance in city life: so they started fresh on their journey, instead of being jaded with sewing and shopping, ready to enjoy all its incidents and scenery, and reached New York with little fatigue.

Neither Ida nor Grace had seen that crowded Babel, and the ever-packed streets, the ever-full sidewalks were to them a greater wonder than the elevated railways or the miles of uniformly high buildings. Lucy was watching for them, and greeted them warmly; she would not allow Grace to go to a hotel with her father, claiming that as they had shopping to do they should be together, and that this would give him freedom to visit any place that would not interest the girls.

But Mr. Charlton's great interest then was in the errand that had brought him there. After an early breakfast he visited the publishing house of Harper & Brothers, and at ten o'clock—late

enough he thought for even a New York business man to be in his office—went to the house of Montgomery & Co.

His inquiries for Arthur were referred to a head clerk, a gray-haired, kindly man, who evidently regretted to say that Arthur had not been at the store since New-Year's day.

“A sad day for New York, sir; it seems to demoralize every body for a week at least.”

“Not you, I see,” replied Mr. Charlton, pleasantly.

“No, I am long past that,—in fact I have found something better.”

“And Arthur Montgomery has not?” said Mr. Charlton, involuntarily. The other shook his head.

“As you will be here for so short a time, perhaps you would prefer seeing him at his hotel;” and he gave the address.

Mr. Charlton took a passing stage and soon reached it, but on the way he made a sudden resolve; he would learn the truth at any cost of mere etiquette; he would go at once to Arthur's room. Summoning a waiter, he gave him his card for Mr. Montgomery, and followed him to the door, to be ready to enter as soon as the card should be presented. He heard strange, muttered sounds, and when the waiter came out, looking

doubtful what course to pursue, entered the room at once.

Although it was now nearly noon, Arthur lay on the bed in a drunken stupor; he was in the dress he had worn the night previous, the faded button-hole bouquet still on his coat. His face was hot and flushed, his eyes bloodshot, and the room was foul with the odor of brandy and cigars.

Mr. Charlton was a brave man, but this sight unnerved him, and his tears flowed unconsciously as he thought of the bright, happy boy, of the young man full of promise, now so fearfully wrecked!

The new, staunch barque may safely pass through heavy seas and encounter opposing winds; but when, by abuse and neglect, its seams have warped and its rudder is lost, there is no more safe sailing, no hope of reaching any desired port.

There is but one other sin—still viler and more brutal—that so degrades the moral nature, ruins the mental powers, destroys all will-force and all self-control, and diseases the whole body, as does drunkenness.

Nor is the beginning of this evil in the thronged saloons, in the hotel wines and brandies; it does not at once fasten its mighty chains

and drag its unwilling captive to destruction. No! for the alarmed victim would resist to death, would summon all humanity to aid him in this righteous crusade; to rescue man made in the image of God; man, the temple of the Holy Spirit, from such foul pollution. No, the beginning of this deadly evil lies in the small, daily dose prescribed by the physician, in the few spoonfuls taken in depression, to nerve one for some effort; alas! often in the glass of wine offered and even urged upon the innocent victim, in a home that should have been a refuge from the world's temptations!

Mr. Charlton lowered the windows a few inches, bathed the fevered head, loosened the cravat and vest, and sat down to watch his waking. Constantly he changed the wet towels on his head, and in about an hour was rewarded by the poor fellow's rousing himself enough to aid in undressing and getting into bed. To offers of coffee or food he shook his head, then closed his eyes and fell again into a heavy, but now more quiet, sleep. Mr. Charlton looked around for some remedy; a brandy bottle with a glass beside it stood on the center-table, a stand of cigars, several packs of cards, and a pile of French novels; but no book that he would read, and no Bible within sight.

Evidently the sleep would be a long one; he shut out the sunlight that was beginning to shine into the sleeper's eyes, laid his card, with hotel address, on the table, and went out again on the street.

But he saw none of the crowds he met, no sight could divert him from this heavy sorrow, and he went back to his room and lay down to rest. Often had he ridden all day on the jolting farm machinery that his men could not manage, hands and feet constantly busy in the work, under the burning sun of midsummer. He had thought this hard, but this morning had exhausted him as those days of severe toil never did. There seemed to him no hope for Arthur, and for Ida's love there was certainly no hope; the risk was too fearful!

“O, wretched woman that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?” The cry goes up constantly from women all over our broad land, from elegant homes as well as hovels, and love and a desire to keep her marriage vow, still bind the wife to her revolting duties—love for the soul that she loved in its purity and for her husband's long-dead love.

No, Ida must not be so sacrificed; she must know the whole truth, and the separation must be final. But how could he tell it? She and

Grace had come on a pleasure-trip, they needed the recreation, they would need all pleasant memories they could gather to sustain them under this blow when it should fall. Surely he had been guided that morning in the discovery of the truth, and now he would wait until the way seemed open to tell it, until some necessity for it arose. He would control himself, too ; they should not be depressed by his manner.

He rested, took an early dinner, and went back to Arthur's room. He found him as he had feared, in a high fever, and sent at once for one of the proprietors of the house. The gentleman was well acquainted with Arthur, and took up the case with interest ; he sent for a febrifuge, which he administered, and volunteered to have an experienced, elderly waiter watch him, and in case of danger go at once for a doctor.

Relieved of this care Mr. Charlton tried to interest himself in his surroundings, and arrived at Mr. Warrener's house ready to respond to the joyful greeting of the girls, and to listen to the incidents and look at the results of their day's shopping. Lucy's knowledge of styles and places had made this satisfactory, and he was glad to praise and admire heartily their artistic taste.

Then when Mr. Warrener came in he was obliged to sit down to another dinner, prolonged

with its changes of courses; until, when Lucy asked what entertainment they would like for the evening, the wearied farmer thought longingly of his bed.

"Do n't let us keep you at home, Lucy," said Ida; "brother will entertain us for awhile, and we 'll go early to bed. The crowds and excitement have left us fit for nothing else; we shall become used to them in time."

"Indeed you had best go, if you are not too fatigued," added Grace. "If you stay, we shall be tempted to talk late, and I can scarcely keep my eyes open."

Thus urged, Lucy and her father went to fulfill an engagement. As soon as they were gone Mr. Charlton said, "I saw Arthur to-day, but he is not well, and can 't be here to-night. I will call on him again in the morning; he will probably be up then," and Ida suspected nothing. He found Arthur better next morning, and was glad he had not alarmed Ida with his fears.

The poor fellow was too weak to rise, full of pain and deeply depressed. He had not even taken any food. Mr. Charlton rang for his breakfast, and read from the morning paper he had brought items of interest that by diverting Arthur's mind from himself enabled him to take some of the fragrant coffee and delicate broiled

chicken ; but he ate entirely without appetite, as one performs a painful duty.

It was even more painful to his friend to watch him, to see that, although not yet twenty-six, all the elasticity and joy of youth had left him, that his mind seemed to have failed faster than the body under his dissipation. He did not mention having been with him the day before, he felt that the invalid was too weak to bear the pain of knowing that Mr. Charlton had seen him in his humiliation ; he took up his card unobserved and when he went, said :

“ I shall be in town for a week and will leave you my address ; if you are worse or need me, do n’t hesitate to send.”

He did not even dare tell him that Ida and Grace were with him, any sudden emotion might bring back the fever ; but Mr. Charlton had no desire to tell him ; he felt that a meeting would torture them unnecessarily as it could accomplish nothing—Arthur would only repeat promises of reformation, honestly made, but utterly out of his power to keep.

St. Paul says : “ He that committeth sin is the servant of sin.” Had Arthur given his youth to God he would have gained the fulfillment of the promise : “ Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

VII.



R. CHARLTON had spent a year in New York twenty years before, and was interested in watching the great changes that had been made. He took the girls to the foot of Wall Street in the Madison Avenue stage, and they made long voyages to foreign lands, watching the weather-beaten vessels just returned and the freshly painted ones with flying streamers,—To Havre; To Hong Kong; To the Sandwich Islands; To Pernambuco.

They crossed the bay to Staten Island, and saw the forts and the handsome grounds of private residences. Even in Winter Central Park was lovely, and their favorite resting-place after a morning among picture-galleries or libraries or book-stores; these last furnished valuable presents for Edward and Albert, while Grace selected stores of table-linen for her mother, and for Mrs. Gray that delightful present for an invalid, a pair of California blankets; so desirable for their combined lightness and warmth, when weakness makes ordinary bedding oppressive.

Some useful gift was selected for each one,

and the new trunk that Grace had long desired was packed with them—every arrangement made for their departure, and still Mr. Charlton had not told Ida! Then he took her to the Park for a last visit, and there—where nature charms away the bitterness of grief—he told her the whole, sad story.

It was hard at first to convince her that Arthur's case could be already hopeless; then harder still to witness her sorrow for him, her old playmate. Evidently she had never rested in the hope of a life spent with him; her anxiety had been to help and save him, her feeling for him rather that of a sister for a younger brother than the esteem and confidence with which a woman of so decided a character should be able to regard a future husband.

How can a woman promise to honor and obey a man who is not, mentally and spiritually, her superior? Respect, confidence, esteem, and love can not be forced; it is not in the power of the wife to give them at will; they must be the direct result of unselfish love, of tested character in the recipient. These thoughts somewhat relieved the stress of Mr. Charlton's pain as he sat by Ida and saw her suffer. Presently he said:

“Yes, it is a tomb; we must bury here the dead past, and such burials are always painful.

But leave here all memories, all mementos, all hopes connected with this trial, lay them in carefully and cover them finally. Heap over the mound present duties, and hopes of a future that shall more than compensate for this sorrow; so shall thoughts of it lead you to 'look upward, and not down; look forward, and not back.'

"It is an old fable, you know, that amber came from tears; some life-fragrance will spring from this grief, dear sister, some strength for work. You are young, and the best of your life still lies before you; rise up to meet it. Since you are not in any way to blame for this sorrow, leave it behind you. We will pray for Arthur; we can do no more. When we go back to Mr. Warrener's write him a kind, but short, letter—a decided farewell. I will give it with the diamond ring, and tell him how I found him; he will then understand that your answer is final. I will not tell him that you are in town, nor must you, as he would insist on seeing you; he is not likely to cross your path in such a crowd."

"O, brother, I must go home with you; how could I enjoy New York now, how could I hide my pain?"

"Do not hide it as a friend; oppose it, banish it as an enemy. Here you will have help in the contest. They know nothing of Arthur, so you

will not be tempted to speak of him, and your mind will be diverted from itself. I hope to see you come back the light of our home."

Ida shook her head, but she acted on Mr. Charlton's advice, and he never spoke to her of the interview with Arthur. He realized that life is too short and too sacred to service to be wasted in hopeless regrets.

Home comforts and quiet seemed delightful to the travelers after the two weeks of constant excitement; but a few days after their return Mr. Charlton took Grace and the lads apart and told them of his visits to Arthur, without connecting Ida in any way with his story; he felt it right that they should understand something of the strength of this temptation and be prepared to watch against its approaches.

"Regard it as a deadly enemy," he said; "never touch in any shape what may give you a taste for liquors, not even a cigar. As in the old fable of the camel, it may take from you all that is dear, if you give it the smallest chance."

"Take one of the Bible descriptions of it, 'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.' It does not say whoso is overcome thereby, but whosoever is so ignorant of its real character as to receive it as a friend. It is the first cigar, the

first glass of wine that works the ruin. Never touch either and you are safe.

“Gracie, my darling, never ask me to give you to a man who uses wine or tobacco, however moderately. You might think that your happiness rested in acceptance; it could be secured only by rejecting a love that could prefer a mere sensual pleasure to your good.

“The man who can take a refined, sensitive woman to share his life, and yet retain habits that will be full of discomfort to her, if not of positive misery, shows a weakness, a self-indulgence and selfishness of character that utterly unfit him to be a true husband.

“My dear boys you know that the Bible standard is, “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, gave up, not an evil habit, but his life; such love makes the only true marriage.”

For some time they were silent, pondering over the father’s words, then Albert said;

“May I read you ‘The Drunkard’s Will?’ I cut it out of a paper the other day.”

Producing it from that universal storehouse, a boy’s pocket, he read:

“‘I, — —, beginning to be enfeebled in body and mind, and having long continued in that course of intemperance from which I have

not resolution and strength to depart, do make and publish this my last Will and Testament. Having been made in the image of my Creator, capable of rational enjoyment and sound reasoning and judgment; of imparting happiness to others, and of promoting the glory of God, and knowing my accountability, yet such is my fondness for sensual gratification, and my utter inability to resist temptation, that I have given myself to intemperance and its associate vices, and make the following bequests: My property I give to the rumseller. My reputation, already tottering on a sandy foundation, I give to destruction. To my beloved wife, who has cheered, comforted, and helped me thus far through life, I give shame, poverty, sorrow, and a broken heart. To each of my innocent children, I bequeath my example, an inheritance of shame and poverty.

“‘Finally, I give my body to disease, pain, and early dissolution, my mind to distraction, and my soul—that can never die—to the disposal of that God whose commands I have broken, and who has warned me by his Word, that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God.’”

Before the end of the month Ida returned.

“I grew restless,” she said; “there was nothing for me to do but enjoy myself, and I can’t

do that in idleness. I must have my regular work."

She took at once her usual duties, but even they did not seem sufficient, and she looked around for new openings. She was feverishly trying to escape from self, and she found a duty that no one else could see.

A young widow had been left destitute, to earn her own support and that of a little daughter; only memories of shame and pain remained of the brief married life in which she hoped to reform the man she loved, as hopeless a task as trying to stem with a straw,—Niagara, placid above the rapids. How shall she now support herself and her child, broken as she is in health and spirit? Two young girls had watched by the bedside of their diseased, and at times demoniac, father, tormenting them for the whisky they dared not give, until when he sank into the grave, cursing them, all the elasticity and strength of youth were gone, sacrificed to their father's vice. Every thing had been sold to supply their tyrant's wants, except the bed on which he lay, the table at his bedside, a single chair, and the few valueless kitchen utensils needed to prepare his meals. He was buried at the expense of the county, but the daughters had been brought up by a good mother, and wanted work, not charity; where

shall they find work that will not be beyond their exhausted strength?

Ida knew them well and studied out the problem. She came to Mr. Charlton one day with its solution.

“Brother, would you mind if I opened dress-making rooms in the village?”

“You, Ida! and why? what do you want that I can not, will not, supply you?”

“Certainly nothing whatever! but if I opened them I could teach Mrs. Brown and Kate and Janey Simpson to support themselves. I would rent a small house that they could all live in and where they could give me dinner; they could put their little furniture into it, and I would supply what else was needed. Two front rooms I would fit up nicely but cheaply for dress-making. Mrs. Brown has a good sewing-machine. I would solicit custom myself and work with them until my outlay was paid and they had learned the business well enough, not only to make and fit dresses nicely, but to keep their books and make their income cover expenses. You know them; don’t you think that they deserve help, and may develop the qualities that command success?”

“Both, my dear girl; but for you to assume such a burden!”

“Honest and honorable work, and honored too by many noble women who have toiled at it for others.”

“Speak to your sisters, my dear, and if they approve how can I disapprove? Your motive deserves success.”

“Thank you, and success if it comes will not be at the expense of any one. The village people have long wished for a good dress-maker, as they have generally been compelled to have their dresses made in Cincinnati at heavy expense, as your family might have done, sir, but for the fact that you had a first-class artiste in the house,” and she made him a demure courtesy.

“You will succeed, I am sure,” said Mr. Charlton; “so sure that I will be glad to give you my note for one hundred dollars, without interest or security, toward carrying out your plan; let me give it you now.”

“You are very kind, and if necessary I will call on you, but just now my own credit is good,” and she hurried off to consult her sisters, eager to carry out the project at once.

A week had not passed before Ida drove the ponies while Grace distributed written circulars at every respectable house in the village; they were gotten up with some attempt at display, and the family had united in copying them.

"NEW DRESS-MAKING ROOMS.

"Miss Ida Rochester and Mrs. Emily Brown have opened rooms for dress-making, next door to the Presbyterian church on Summit Street. They have the latest New York styles, and solicit your custom."

Great was the wonder over this innocent looking sheet of note paper—a very apple of discord among the gossips.

"Yes, I knew those Charltons were spending too much money; a trip to New York for 'em all; and see the finery the girls brought home! I'd a great mind to get up and go out last Sunday; I'd no good of the sermon at all with those new bonnets before me, and such cloaks! wraps they call 'em. I'd give my Arabella Louisa a *rap* if she tried to wear such a thing."

"Well, now, I thought I'd like jest such a fixin' made out o' that old cloth cloak I've had lyin' by, dear knows how long! It would jest be a good joke to wear my old cloak made like their 'n; I'd be willin' to pay somethin' for the priv'lege."

"Poor Ida!" said a sentimental young married woman, "her Arthur has forsaken her. I feared it would be so! The day I spent there last Summer I noticed that he showed her no lover-like attentions, and she seemed so hopeless that she did not even attempt to draw him to her

side, as young girls do unconsciously. He showed no more interest in her than he did in Grace; not once did he clasp her hand or put his arm around her. I could not have endured it! The fascinations of New York ladies have won him from her; repeatedly have I told her that her manner was too cold to satisfy true love. And now she is degraded to a menial capacity! I must go to her and assure her of my tenderest sympathy."

"What a shame for Mr. Charlton to treat his wife's sister so!" said a loud-voiced woman who had vainly tried to be intimate with the Charlton family. "The idea of sending her out to earn her own living! with his big farm and all that land wasted in woods! he could have supported her and not felt it. I do hate stingy folks."

"Now *I* think that *Mrs.* Charlton has done it," said an affected woman, whose flirtations mortified her husband and were the terror of half the wives in the neighborhood. "You may rest assured that she did n't like that trip to New York without *her*; they might, at least, have *offered* to take her. I questioned Edward about her, and learned that they had not even *thought* about it, then I knew just how the land lay. I never could endure such neglect, such preference

of another's happiness to mine. No! Mrs. Charlton did what any self-respecting woman would have done, she expelled the serpent from her Eden!"

"Well, she was mighty bad off for company, or she would n't have picked up that dead alive Emily Brown," said her husband, trying to console himself for trouble at home by picking flaws abroad.

"O, she knew she'd make a good drudge; the woman's so broken down she would n't dare say her soul's her own."

"Well, of all things, I hate deceit! there she pretended she was goin' to see the minister's family. I do n't suppose she went nigh 'em; she's just been picking up New York styles. Well she's done for herself, no use settin' her cap for the minister now; with them grand ways of his he would n't look at her, I'll be bound."

"If I can scare up money for a dress, I'm going; it will be fun to see that minx taking my orders."

"Well now, I'm real sorry," said a grandmother, "I never saw the least bit of an air about her, and she's that good to poor, sick people! I've seen her wait on 'em as if they were ladies, and she looking as pretty as a pictur'. I used to wonder that she wa'n't a bit proud."

Many noble hearts in the village guessed at once her motive, and when the tormentors appeared they found with Ida a body-guard of devoted friends, before whom they dared offer no insult. It was not long until she told these friends her real reason for undertaking the work, with a request that they would keep it a secret among themselves. So the gossips, undisturbed, continued to enjoy their misapprehensions.

VIII.



DA always found the rooms clean and the women at work. Mrs. Brown was a careful though not rapid machinist, and as the sewing-machine was her own, she understood it fully and needed no direction; Janey was neat and careful with hand-sewing, but showed no talent for cutting and fitting; Kate had taste and would have fitted well had she not been too careless in preparing her work.

Ida had bought calico dresses for them and insisted that each one should make her own, only asking help for any fitting she could not do alone; but, watching the work as she did, she soon found that she must give even these plain dresses her constant supervision if she would not have them discredit her "New York styles." So she laid aside two of them, and directed her three assistants to watch her as she measured her pattern on Mrs. Brown, adapting it to her figure, laid it straight on the goods, marked each seam with a pointed crayon, and then took them up with the utmost care, and trying on repeatedly, until the fit was perfect. The second she prepared in the

same careful way before them ; the third she left to them, and then spent more time afterward, trying to make it decent, than she had taken for either of the others. She began to appreciate the advantages of her education, that, beginning almost at babyhood, had so cultivated every sense and faculty as not merely to double its value, but to give it a trustworthiness that untrained senses do not possess.

As Faith Gartney said, "No wonder that a girl who never studied geometry can't lay the table-cloth straight!"

No amount of cramming can ever compensate for the want of this training of eye and ear, of hand and foot, of clear articulation, of sweet, modulated tones. No knowledge of languages, of mathematics, of philosophy, or even of "theologies," can give the self-possession and usefulness that careful and thorough physical training secures. It forms a noble and substantial foundation for any structure that may be built upon it ; without it we have often seen men of erudition and genius hanging—like Mohammed's coffin,— " 'twixt heaven and earth."

Next to a home and parents, a well-managed kindergarten can supply this want ; only let us see that the kindergarten is conducted on the American and not on the German system, where

the Bible and the knowledge of God are ignored, since "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

But all of Ida's Winter was not spent in toil. When the creek was frozen solid they had large skating parties there, the whole scene lighted up by immense wood fires (since wood cost only the expense of cutting and hauling), and ending with a hot and appetizing, though plain, supper at the farm-house. Or they had grand coasting on the long hill-slopes, and merry sleigh-rides.

Then the literary society met twice a month, except during the hot and busy months of Summer. All the members of Mr. Charlton's family were old enough, and none of them too old, to enjoy it, and to take their share in provision for the enjoyment of others. The subjects were always assigned by a committee, changed each month, and they were never too wise to listen to reasonable petitions. The lads were sometimes set to discuss a practical question, always briefly and without notes; sometimes to read aloud or to provide puzzles for the grown folks. Sensible essays, music, and well-selected, well-read articles of value on questions of popular interest, made this a school for the young and kept the old from getting rusty.

When such societies meet in cities it is gener-

ally best that no refreshment be allowed, since, however small may be the original bill of fare, a love of display is apt to creep in, until preparation for the evening becomes a heavy burden to the busy housekeeper, and the society falls into disfavor. But here some of the members rode three or four miles to attend it, and would need food on their return if the society did not provide it; so they allowed hot coffee, buttered bread or buns, and one kind of plain cake (apples, of course, never count in the country).

Any one violating this by-law by furnishing any addition to these specified articles of food, would be punished by a fine of five dollars, to be used toward the establishment of a public library in the village. They had long talked of a public library, and hoped to have one; but no one liked the idea of paying this fine, so the supper remained an easy thing to prepare, and yet a help to the sociability of the evening.

They were the more careful to make these evenings pleasant, because one element of social life common in country towns, and alas! too often in cities, was lacking here; for years the leading people of their Church had resolutely opposed all plans for church speculation in the shape of fairs, suppers, exhibitions, etc., and had finally driven the money changers out of the temple.

But they tried to make the prayer-meetings a sort of compensation, and they succeeded in having them always full. The infant-class room where they were held was so bright and warm, so well aired and lighted, the chairs brought in from the audience-room and basement so comfortable, that every body looked cheerful; then the singing was full of life and feeling; all remarks were short (boiled down, as their pastor used to say); women took part freely and added to the interest,—for women, at least, since they had often a message for their peculiar trials as mothers and busy, toiling housewives. This strange prayer-meeting also had a budget-box, where any question of duty or difficult passage of Scripture, any request for prayer for self or children, or any thanksgiving for answered prayer—in fact, any want or aspiration of the spiritual life—might be brought. The box was placed where the slips could be dropped unobserved through the day or evening. At the close of the exercises the pastor gathered up the notes and read them all, answering what he could, and deferring the answer to any difficult one to the next meeting. Then he made his own five minutes' speech, taking care that it should explain and apply just one truth that might be carried home into daily life and made the subject of the

next meeting's discussions. No prayer-meeting, however interesting, was allowed to continue over an hour ; they began at seven in Winter and half-past seven in Summer, so there was always time for cordial interchange of greetings afterward. The prayer-meeting grew to be a great attraction, and no trifle even of bad weather was allowed to hinder its regular attendants.

Active, out-door exercise and healthful habits had made the Charlton family strong, and given them exemption from many illnesses to which the village people were subject ; so it was a shock to them as well as a pain when Grace became ill with a low fever. There was little suffering, except the aching, bruised feeling that fever brings ; but appetite and strength left her and her sleep was broken and disturbed by troubled dreams. It was a severe and sudden check in her busy, happy life. Tender care and nursing alleviated much of the suffering, and soon the worst symptoms were subdued, but the want of energy and strength were hard to bear. It seemed to the young girl that all the life and joy of youth, all its pleasant, self-satisfying activity was over forever, that she must henceforth submit to be an invalid like her aunt, Mrs. Gray. How often she had wondered at her placid endurance of severe pain and sleepless nights, of the plain food

to which she must restrict her appetite, of her inability to read or write long, or to endure excitement of any kind. The fear of this had made her struggle against the first symptoms of illness and try to conceal them; when headache and languor came on she attempted to drive them off by long walks; she forced herself to be cheerful and to take up daily duties; whereas, had she given up her efforts and submitted to medical treatment she might have escaped the long illness. Now the overtasked powers avenged themselves and submission was inevitable. Her mother understood from her own experience the peculiar trials of this time of enforced idleness, and one afternoon, when Mrs. Gray was resting on a lounge in Grace's room, she read to them this passage from Ruskin concerning "Life Rests:"

"There is no music in a rest, but there is the making of music in it.' In our whole life-melody the music is broken off here and there by 'rests,' and we foolishly think we have come to the end of the tune.

"God sends a time of forced leisure, sickness, disappointed plans, frustrated efforts, and makes a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives, and we lament that our voices must be silent, and our part missing in the music which ever goes up to the ear of the Creator. How does the musi-

cian read the rest? See him beat the time with unvarying count, and catch up the next note true and steady, as if no breaking place had come between.

“Not without design does God write the music of our lives. Be it ours to learn the tune, and not be dismayed at the ‘rests.’ They are not to be slurred over, not to be omitted, not to destroy the melody, not to change the key-note. If we look up, God himself will beat the time for us.

“With the eye on him, we shall strike the next note full and clear. If we say sadly to ourselves, ‘There is no music in a rest,’ let us not forget ‘there is the making of music in it.’ The making of music is often a slow and painful process in this life. How patiently God works to teach us! How long he waits for us to learn the lesson!”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Gray, “we cheerfully give years of toil to acquire the little knowledge and skill in music that we obtain here; but how unwilling we are to learn the full, grateful, joyous songs of those ‘who came out of great tribulation!’ Often I think that the music of heaven will be no succession of oratorios, but the glad outpouring of gratitude for remembered help and comfort. The meeting with an old friend, the

listening to the story of some other saved sinner, will revive the memory of long-forgotten mercies, and lead us to acknowledge them with song ‘unto Him who loved us.’ Song, you know, is the natural language of joy here, and therefore the worship of heaven—the home of perfect happiness—must be largely a worship of song.”

“Auntie, you always speak of heaven as though you had been there, it seems so real to you.”

“That is not strange, since my thoughts have had so much leisure to travel thither. My life now is spent in the past or in the future; my past is so full of mistakes and sins that but for the assurance of forgiveness and the trust that what seem to me blunders may have been providentially ordered for me, I could not endure the retrospect. But I have the assurance that ‘all things work together for good to them that love God,’ and the promise, ‘Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.’ I ask Him to undo the evil I may have done, to overrule my mistakes so that the good of those I love may yet be promoted even through me. Then I rest in faith, and she unfolds her wings and bears me to a land where there will be no blunders, no sin, no wasted lives, no fruitless efforts. We shall

work there for the Master, for it is written, 'His servants shall serve him.' So all my failures may have been a preparation for the grander work there, as your 'rest,' dear Gracie, may make your life-work more expressive of God's will."

"O, I trust it may be so," said Grace; "but auntie, I don't see how people who have no trust in God, no faith in his love and providential care, and no hope of heaven, can endure trouble and pain, and loss of friends and property. No wonder that so many of them commit suicide; to think of losing all here and having nothing hereafter! Isn't that the reason that so many oppose the idea of immortality? Annihilation seems so much easier than going out alone in utter darkness to an unknown future."

"I think you are right, dear; and such opposers might be answered as I heard brother answer a Universalist: 'Suppose you are right, and I am wrong, am I not as safe as you even then? But suppose you should prove to be mistaken, and the Bible doctrines true, which, then, is most likely to be safe?'"

Mrs. Charlton, who had gone out for a few minutes, came in just then. "You are talking too long," she said; "let me read you something quieting." They listened gladly as she read:

“TRUST.

“The child leans on its parent’s breast,
Leaves there its cares, and is at rest.
The bird sits swinging by its nest,
 And tells aloud
His trust in God, and so is blest
 ‘Neath every cloud.

He has no store, he sows no seed,
Yet sings aloud and doth not heed;
By flowing streams or grassy mead
 He sings, to shame
Men who forget, in hour of need,
 A Father’s name.

The heart that trusts forever sings,
And feels as light as it had wings;
A well of peace within it springs:
 Come good or ill,
Whate’er to-day, to-morrow brings,
 It is His will.”

“IN THE FOG.

“The sparrows are chirping, chirping,
 Though the air with mist is full;
They seem to say, ‘What matter
 If the day is cold and dull?
Or fair or foul the weather,
 The Lord is merciful.

He gives us each our portion
 In sunshine or in rain;
We eat our crumbs and praise Him
 For every tiny grain;
He thinks of the little sparrows,
 And how can we complain?

The chirp of the sparrow chides me;
 Faint not, O soul of mine!
 If the Lord for such is caring,
 He'll care for thee and thine.
 Weak is the faith that falters
 When the sun forgets to shine.

'For are not ye much better
 Than they?' the dear Lord says;
 'Why, then, are ye so faithless?
 Trust me in darkest days?'
 Chirp on, ye little sparrows,
 I, too, will trust and praise."

—MRS. HELEN E. BROWN.

“SUFFERING.

“Suffering is the work now sent;
 Nothing can I do but lie
 Suffering as the hours go by:
 All my powers to this are bent.

Suffering is my gain ; I bow
 To my heavenly Father's will,
 And receive it, hushed and still:
 Suffering is my worship now.”

—RICHTER.

“Aunt Mary,” said Grace, next day, “I was talking over our conversation with Edward last night, and he says he knows several young men who are honorable and upright, but who claim that their ‘honest doubt’ is better than the self-deceit of half the Church members.”

“That may be, my dear ; but would not honest faith be better than either? They will never

learn the truth by standing at a distance from it; the Scripture promise is, 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' Are not these men somewhat like those who stood outside the ark, doubting Noah's word and the threatened deluge? What support or consolation can infidelity afford them? What refuge in time of trouble, what comfort in death, what hope for eternity? The ranks of infidelity are not recruited from those who have faithfully followed Christ, who have learned to know him as a friend, who have lived in communion with him, but have finally thought it a delusion, and that Materialism or Buddhism contains more satisfying, enlightening, hopeful truth. How many instances are on record of men in doubt or dislike of Christian doctrine going to the Bible to sustain their doubts, finding the truth instead, and resting in it and proclaiming it, as did St. Paul. Such men as Robert Ingersoll wisely avoid acquaintance with the Bible, as his writings show plainly. Some one after hearing his lecture, 'The Mistakes of Moses,' remarked, 'The lecture had better have been called, The Mistakes of Robert.'"

IX.

 AMONG the books Mr. Charlton had brought from New York were two new ones on geology, written by wise men who knew how to simplify and present clearly important truths. This study was new to Edward and more fascinating than a novel. Ever since they could remember they had been learning to know the different trees by their foliage and manner of growth, the several grains by their differing stalks and heads, the various grasses and what soil each prefers, where the fine abundant herd grass flourishes and where only the coarse orchard grass will grow; how a little heap of half-eaten leaves and disturbed ground may warn the careful observer away from the nest of the yellow-jacket, the terror of man and animals on a farm. They learned the different insect pests and the best ways of protecting the garden from them or of destroying them, and that the slandered toad and the birds are man's best helpers in this work, taking from us far less than they have earned.

Now Albert went, after morning lessons were

done, to watch the wood-cutters, to learn the texture and bark of different trees, how by the peculiar roughness of the bark and the growth of the moss they show the storm side, and thus have often indicated to lost travelers the points of the compass. He learned how to judge the age of a tree by counting its concentric rings of growth, to observe the different modes of branching, and learn why one tree is durable and valuable for building, another capable of taking a fine polish for furniture, while another is fit only for fuel. Meanwhile Edward was studying the rocks on the place, applying his knowledge as far as possible and thereby making it his own possession; unlike the school-girl who, on being questioned about some scientific truth, said: "Yes, I know it all; it is in one of the books in my trunk."

He studied the cliffs where the creek, cutting its way ages ago, had left the layers of rock exposed, as though to show man some of earth's hidden wonders. He collected stones full of fossil remains, and water-washed boulders, that showed how the great valley of the Ohio was once the bed of an immense lake. He found on the farm beds of dolomite that brought the State geologist to examine and experiment upon; for days he wandered over the place, and Edward

improved to the utmost this splendid opportunity to become acquainted with the stones and geologic formation of the land. The dolomite that would have made a beautiful building stone, and that the committee hoped to use in building the projected court-house in Indianapolis, was found too brittle for working, as it lay too near the surface and had hardened. But Edward discovered a quarry of limestone near the house, near the surface of the ground, too, and with the land sloping on one side so that it was a small labor to open it, and as this was composed of distinct layers, averaging three inches in thickness, it supplied the place with large paving-stones; with these they made high, smooth walks to the different out-buildings, and still the supply seemed inexhaustible. Edward had already placed shelves diagonally across one corner of the library and arranged his specimens of minerals there, each labeled and placed in its own class.

But these were only their amusements. Long before Christmas the corn had been husked and gathered into the corn-cribs; the cattle had required daily care, and this was never left to their father. Jim helped in these labors, his life going on in safe quiet and regularity; he was never trusted to go to the village alone, and Miss Catharine took great care that his studies should not

only fit him for practical life, but that they should so interest him as to lift him above sensual pleasures. He learned to admire the wonders around him and to grow fond of the living creatures; he taught the cows and calves to come when he called their names, and the chickens to eat from his hand. It was a pretty sight—Jim stooping to feed his pets who clustered around him, while the pigeons lighted on his head and shoulders and ran along his arms to secure their share. But often Margaret found that food she had saved for their meals had been carried off to give variety to the meals of his pets; until he came it had not been necessary to turn keys in the Charlton house; now they were careful to do it that no temptation might be placed in his way. Since poor Jim's uneducated conscience was not sensitive to right and wrong, they must watch that right habits should aid in the growth of right principles.

Ida found that her pupils needed many lessons besides those in dress-making, but they were grateful and willing to improve; had they been *anxious* to do so and watchful to imitate her ways and act upon her hints her task would have been far easier. But the difficulty with them, as it is with uneducated people generally, was that they were not conscious of their own ignorance;

certain ways were Miss Ida's and they suited her well, but they sometimes said among themselves with self-satisfaction, "'T is n't *our* way."

But the little Julia was to be trained among them, and Ida—knowing how any refinement or attention to good manners would help her through life—tried to reform the untaught ways of the household. It seemed to them very strange and unnecessary to use napkins at dinner, to eat with their forks, to ask to be helped instead of reaching over the table, to take food from the dish with its fork or spoon instead of using their own. It was well that Ida dined with them, for at the other meals they enjoyed the freedom of old habits.

One morning Kate had a valuable lesson. Mrs. Manning had come in early to say that she wanted her new Spring dress to wear that afternoon, as she expected company; every thing was done but the basque, and Miss Ida had not yet come; she would show her how well she could do it without her aid! When Miss Ida came in at the usual time she found Mrs. Manning standing with the dress on and Kate vainly trying to pull out the wrinkles. She had laid the pattern crooked upon the goods, and the whole was askew. She dismissed Mrs. Manning with the promise to send for her when it was ready, and

vainly attempted by rebasting to overcome the difficulty; to cut away the crooked parts would make the basque too small. Janey was dispatched to try to match it in the village, but it had been bought in Cincinnati and there was no time to send so far. Suddenly Ida recollected that among the dress-patterns she had bought in New York was one like this; so she sent Janey with a sample and note to Mrs. Charlton requesting her, if the pieces were exactly alike, to send her the goods: Janey soon came back in triumph; they were exactly alike, and Miss Ida had the work finished in time. But she had lost her own dress, and she determined to make it useful.

“Kate,” she said decidedly, “you have made me trouble to-day by neglecting to observe my directions. You can not say you did not understand them. I have so often shown you just how to do the work that sometimes it seems to me you will never learn. Certainly you never will unless you become in earnest yourself and cultivate a teachable spirit; you need constantly to be reminded, and now I must give you a reminder. You have deprived me of my new dress, for I could not wear such a fit; but since you chose to make it so you are the person to wear it. I give you the dress on condition that you wear it just as you have fitted it; this is my

last hope for you ; if you do not learn from it a lesson of carefulness you will never make a dress-maker."

Kate submitted and wore the dress, with frequent tears, for each time she put it on she saw more plainly her faults. This was a decided step onward, and in time she could be trusted to cut out and fit plain dresses.

Now the farm was cleaned up for Spring work, the fences put in order, and the ground enriched ; for every thing around gave promise of the approach of the time dear to poets and to the young. The air grew soft and fragrant, the sunshine had a warmth and sweetness that Winter had missed : the grass put on a tender, delicate green as though Winter snows had purified it. Spring birds came back and were busy and anxious about their housekeeping plans ; for the time of chirp and song, of wooing and coyness was soon over, and the dainty wife took part in the labor of home making.

In the woods bloomed Nature's darlings—the Spring beauty, the dicentra, violets in white, yellow, blue, and purple, only less lovely than the English and Southern violet in lacking fragrance, that expression of the spirit of a flower. Eryge-nia, daughter of the Spring, and sanguinaria and anemone, patches of wind-tossed snow ! In the

flower-beds near the house crocuses and hyacinths of every shade made the air fragrant, while dog-wood and red-bud blossomed in the woods against a shaded background of dark-green pine and spruce and cedar, mingled with the light, fresh green of the new foliage on the deciduous trees.

O, glorious Easter time! when all nature calls us to rise from earthly entanglements and dead hopes; to put on the purity and freshness of a better life, and to rejoice in the light of the risen Sun of Righteousness!

“THE VOICE OF THE GRASS.

“Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere;
By the dusty roadside,
On the sunny hillside,
Close by the noisy brook,
In every shady nook,
I come creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come creeping, smiling everywhere;
All round the open door,
Where sit the aged poor;
Here where the children play,
In the bright and merry May,
I come creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere;
In the noisy city street
My pleasant face you 'll meet,
Cheering the sick at heart,
Toiling his busy part,
Silently creeping, creeping everywhere.

Here I come creeping, creeping everywhere ;
 My humble song of praise
 Most joyfully I raise
 To Him at whose command
 I beautify the land,
 Creeping, silently creeping, everywhere."

—SARAH ROBERTS.

“CHORUS OF FLOWERS.

“ We are the sweet flowers,
 Born of sunny showers
 (Think, whene'er you see us, what our beauty saith),
 Utterance, mute and bright,
 Of some unknown delight,
 We fill the air with pleasure by our simple breath :
 All who see us love us—
 We befit all places ;
 Unto sorrow we give smiles, and unto graces races.

Mark our ways, how noiseless
 All, and sweetly voiceless,
 Though the March winds pipe to make our passage clear ;
 Not a whisper tells
 Where our small seed dwells,
 Nor is known the moment green when our tips appear.
 We tread the earth in silence,
 In silence build our bowers,
 And leaf by leaf in silence show till we laugh a-top, sweet
 flowers.

Think of all these treasures,
 Matchless works, and pleasures,
 Every one a marvel, more than thought can say ;
 Then think in what bright showers
 We thicken fields and bowers,
 And with what heaps of sweetness half stifle wanton May ;
 Think of the mossy forests
 By the bee-birds haunted,
 And all those Amazonian plains, lone lying as enchanted.

Who shall say that flowers
Dress not heaven's own bowers?
Who its love, without us, can fancy, or sweet floor.

Who shall even dare
To say we sprang not there,
And came not down, that love might bring one piece of
heaven the more?
O! pray believe that angels
From those blue dominions
Brought us in their white laps down, 'twixt their golden
pinions. —LEIGH HUNT.

HYMN TO THE FLOWERS.

Day-stars! that ope your eyes with morn to twinkle
From rainbow galaxies of earth's creation,
And dew-drops on her lonely altars sprinkle
As a libation!

Ye matin worshipers! who bending lowly
Before the uprisen sun—God's lidless eyes—
Throw from your chalices a sweet and holy.
Incense on high!

'Neath cloistered boughs, each floral bell that swingeth
And tolls its perfume on the passing air,
Makes Sabbath in the fields, and ever ringeth
A call to prayer.

In the sweet-scented pictures, Heavenly Artist!
With which thou paintest Nature's wide-spread hall
What a delightful lesson thou impartest
Of love to all!

Not useless are ye, flowers, though made for pleasure,
Blooming o'er field and wave, by day and night,
From every source your sanction bids me treasure
Harmless delight.

Posthumous glories ! angel-like collection !
Upraised from seed or bulb interred in earth,
Ye are to me a type of resurrection,
And second birth.

Were I, O God ! in churchless lands remaining,
Far from all voice of teachers or divines,
My soul would find in flowers of thy ordaining
Priests, sermons, shrines !

—HORACE SMITH.

Now the men prepared the garden ground, and the lads helped them plant lettuce and cress and parsley and peas, while the hot-beds, with young plants that would be ready to set out when all danger of frost was over, were uncovered daily to the warm air.

Suddenly came a snow-storm ; but the brave flowers smiled through it, in full confidence that sunshine would soon conquer it. Now the orchards were white and pink with fruit-blossoms, a transient fairy-land.

Soon the early garden was planted and the great expanse of corn-land was broken up, drilled, and sown by machinery. The men disinfected and whitewashed the inside of chicken and outhouses, while the farm-house underwent a thorough cleaning.

With the Spring days Grace's strength came slowly back. She loved to sit on the sunny side of the porch and dream sweet dreams, while

drinking in the beauty and sweetness and active life of all around. No matter how busy they were, no pleasant day was allowed to pass without a ride, when she and Mrs. Gray wished it; generally a slow, quiet drive, more restful than repose on a lounge would have been. The dainty Spring vegetables gave them appetite, and tranquil life in the open air brought back sleep.

It was a great joy to all when Grace insisted on taking again her place in the household and resuming old duties. But nowhere was she more warmly welcomed than at Sabbath-school. Edward had kept her class, and exerted himself to interest the pupils; but he learned a lesson as to woman's natural adaptability to train the young when he heard a little girl say, joyously:

“We've got a teacher now!”

“Why, you've had a teacher—that nice young gentleman.”

“O, he's not a teacher—he's only a man!” was the scornful answer, and one that helped to moderate Edward's natural pride of manhood, and show him his sister's ability.

Grace was able now to take care of the flowers, and soon the house was sweet with the breath of roses—the delicate hermosa and sweet-brier, the lordly jacqueminot, the dear old cinnamon rose of exquisite fragrance, and the abundant centi-

folio, every one of its hundred leaves rich in benevolent sweetness. It would be a delightful task to name the dear, old-fashioned flowers that blossomed in succession on lawn and woodland. Each day brought its new charm and a constant temptation to be out among them.

Jim was happy with the young broods of chickens and turkeys, and with the calves. This was to him the first sight of nature's annual resurrection, and Mr. Charlton never failed to remind his household of the lessons and the hopes it brought. His Bible-readings to them now were not connected chapters, but verses selected here and there from that loving poet, David, who, as a watchful shepherd boy, saw the beauty of sky and mountain, of flowers and brooks, and the might of storm and tempest, as the busy king never could have seen them; from the grandeur of Isaiah; from the tender teachings of Christ, who loved the flowers he made, and chose them to illustrate his love for us; from St. Paul's careful study of natural religion, and his illustrations of resurrection and the future life. It was easy here to understand the meaning of such verses as these:

“Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

“The branch can not bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine.”

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

“It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.”

The white strawberry-blossoms had starred their beds, and soon the green fruit appeared and began to enlarge and redden under the sunshine. The berry season kept Jim busy for months—the succession of raspberries, blackberries, dewberries, gooseberries, and currants. There were cherries to gather; and from the time they began to change color Jim haunted the cherry-trees as faithfully as the robins did. Margaret’s food was safe now, since nature had opened to him her abundant treasures; life was one continued feast, and its fullness kept him from even thought of wrong. He had learned to weed the garden-beds, and took pride in the growth of the vegetables and the neat appearance of the walks. He now knew how to select and gather fruit and vegetables carefully, and felt each day that he had learned something, had taken one step nearer to the small farm that was still his air-castle.

X.

UMMER wore on. The Spring chickens and Summer apples had been sold, fruit put up for Winter use, the hay cut and raked up by machines that Mr. Charlton owned, and safely housed or stacked for the Winter, and now the wheat was ready for the dreaded reapers and threshers. Jim had done so well that they all dreaded for him the temptation. After consultation, it was decided that Miss Grace should take him with her on her visit to a friend about four miles distant. This would keep her from the nervous excitement and the severe toil incident to such a raid, and place Jim out of harm's way. But the day after they went—the very day that the reapers were expected—Mr. Charlton, going to his barn at twilight, found Jim coiled up in the hay. He had walked all the way back, had gotten in the village a bag of crackers and some cigars, and was waiting for the reapers to spend the night in the barn.

Hitherto he had seen only the forgiving side of Mr. Charlton's character; he was now to learn its granite basis, its righteous indignation against

sin while trying to save the sinner. "What are you doing here? Why did you leave Miss Grace?" he asked sternly.

The detected boy could only tell the truth. Without a word, Mr. Charlton took him by the hand, and, with long, hurried strides, brought him to one of his tenant-houses at the extreme edge of the place from the entrance gate—a lonely spot, where, without the watch that Sandy and his wife kept, the fruit would have been stolen. Mrs. McGoveny was a strong, brave Scotch-woman. She did the laundry work for the house and herself, cultivated their nice garden, from which and from their poultry she almost clothed and fed herself and Sandy. Sandy was stout and energetic. He worked on the farm when needed, and at other times found employment in the neighborhood. Jim's heart sank at once. Here would be a muscular government, stronger for him than the government of love under which he had spent the year.

"Mrs. McGoveny," said Mr. Charlton, "I want to put this boy under your care. Do you think you can keep him from leaving the place?"

"No fear of that, sir. Sandy has a stout ash stick, and he knows how to use it; and when he's away I'm not that weak myself but I could manage him."

"Very well. I'll pay his board with you for a week. If he leaves your ground, you are not to take him back and give him food and shelter, nor will I give him a home again; but if he obeys you and stays quietly here, I may possibly take him back. I can tell better about that when you report to me how he has behaved here. Good-night, Mrs. McGoveny." And for the first time since he came to the farm Jim had to go to bed without any one to wish him good-night. He sobbed himself to sleep, big boy as he was; but his regrets were not for the lost delights of the reaping and threshing, but for the home that had become dear to him.

Sandy and his wife gave him plenty of plain food, and his bed was neat and comfortable; but he had not realized before how the kindly tones, the air of refinement, the atmosphere of love, had sweetened and brightened his life. Day by day he brooded over this heavy trouble. Must he live always in such a home, or, still worse, be again homeless, with no one to care for him, no place that belonged to him? Was he never again to see Mr. Edward, or Mr. Albert, or Miss Grace, or the chickens and the calves? The horses, too; they had learned to come at his call, and Mr. Charlton trusted him to ride them to water. He wondered who gathered the vegetables, and col-

lected the eggs, and kept the garden-beds free from weeds.

It was not strange that the good woman's childless heart grew soft toward the unhappy lad, and that, when Sandy came home on Saturday night with the request that she would take him up to the farm-house, she had no complaint to make. His confession was humble, and his entreaty to be taken back showed that he had appreciated his privileges better than they supposed. When told he might stay, his earnest "You've been mighty good to me," and the choking that sent him out into the yard showed that Jim had found his heart. He lay a long time with his face buried in the grass; then he rushed to visit one pet after another, and came back gentle and subdued, but with shining eyes. What a Sabbath the next day was! How the sun shone and the birds sang! The boy never forgot it.

But Jim was not the only sufferer from his disobedience. No one is so separated from humanity that his sin does not bring suffering to some innocent being. Again and again Mr. Charlton questioned how to keep the boy from temptation. He well knew that he had no right to expect an answer to his prayers that Jim might be kept from evil unless he himself would do all in his power to keep evil from him. As long as

he continued to raise wheat he must employ that class of men, and thus encourage a source of evil to the entire community. Two young men from their quiet village were in the penitentiary for crime. Where did the responsibility of this rest? Certainly not on the ignorant and degraded class, but on those who permitted or encouraged dram-shops, horse-races, and gambling-hells.

Men who are strong in inherited virtues and in the wise training of careful Christian parents, for both of which they may thank God, not themselves, forget, in their strength and unconscious pride of goodness, the Bible rules: "Let no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way;" "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

Mr. Charlton's broad wheat-fields had always been a pride, as well as a source of profit. True, he could buy young cattle and cultivate grass for them instead; but he dreaded to try new plans. It seemed so much easier and safer to go on in the accustomed way. Wheat-raising he understood, and felt that he ran no risks in that as he might in buying and raising cattle. It was for awhile a perplexity, a doubt, what was duty, and he carried it to his second conscience, as he some-

times called his wife. She said but little ; she did not even advise him what to do ; but somehow the path seemed plainer, and when the usual time to sow the Winter wheat came, he told Sandy that he had changed his plans, and would try pasturing instead ; so in place of wheat they sowed grass-seed. A year or two of experiment satisfied him that this was as profitable and less laborious than wheat-raising. Since the immense wheat-fields of the West can supply not only our own but foreign countries, no farmer of a few hundred acres need meet this discomfort and perpetuate this evil.

One Sabbath afternoon in the Fall Mr. Charlton took Jim with him to the field, where last year he had shown him the pale green of the young wheat, and asked him to notice the difference. Then he described the pride he had long felt in his wheat, and told him why he had given up raising it and put the ground into grass instead.

The poor waif was astounded. That any body should make such a sacrifice for him ! That any body had so cared for him as to watch and plan for his good ! Why, Mr. Charlton could not have been more careful for one of his own children ! He tried to express this, and his voice failed him. It was a favorable moment to speak

of the Good Shepherd, who left heaven to give his LIFE for the sheep—of the watchful care that numbers the very hairs of our heads, and that lets no sparrow fall but as he directs. The soil was prepared, and the good seed sank into it and germinated, and in time brought forth fruit.

There was a time of deep seriousness in their Church that Winter. The earnest clergyman could not rest without some assurance that he was in the path of duty; he longed for seals to his ministry. Often he spoke of this to Mrs. Gray; and while Mr. Warrener in his study earnestly besought a blessing, the invalid on her lounge joined in the prayer, and so the promise to "two or three" was fulfilled.

Jim had grown a stout, strong boy. He was now twelve years old—old enough to attend the early prayer-meeting—and Mr. Charlton took him with the family. Before Spring Jim's changed manner and the glad light that his face habitually wore showed that the Light of the World had manifested himself even to him. Mr. Charlton had his reward.

Edward and Albert loved the farm. They knew how dear it was to their father, and how he liked to pursue accustomed methods and those that relieved him from anxiety. So when they saw him giving up his own wishes and plans for

the spiritual good of one poor waif, whose salvation seemed almost hopeless, they realized something of the value of the immortal soul. "What shall it profit a man?" It haunted them in work and pleasure, and they brought to the religious meetings a new interest.

"Says God, Who comes toward me an inch through doubts dim,
In blazing light do I approach a yard towards him."

Even an Oriental poet had learned this by the best of all earthly teachers, experience; so, though their way was longer than Jim's had been, and they were bewildered and hindered by the wisdom of this world, that, placing God at a distance from us and calling prayer a delusion, would leave us helpless and alone in darkness, they at last ventured to trust wholly.

"Nothing before, nothing behind;
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The Rock beneath."

Mr. Warrener had taken a deep interest in Edward's study of geology; and one evening, as the literary society had directed him to read something on the subject, he brought an article that he had cut from one of the religious papers on the subject of "Earthquakes." He read as follows:

"It is an accepted fact of science that toward the center of the earth the fires of the primal

creation are still raging, and that the matter of the globe around the center, if not fluid with heat, is at least at such an intense temperature as would fluidize the hardest granite if the pressure upon it were sufficiently lifted to give that vent which incandescence requires. The volcanoes tell that story. But it is not often realized how alarmingly near to us these fires are.

“Thus the temperature rises so rapidly, as descent is made towards the earth’s center, as to force the conclusion that at a distance of not more than sixty or seventy miles from the surface the heat is great enough to melt the hardest rock. But this distance is only about one-sixty-sixth part of the line from the surface to the center. In other words, the shell around the burning part of the world is to the flaming mass as one is to sixty-six. The shell of an egg is to the egg about as one is to twenty. That is, the shell on which we strut in our ephemeral grandeur is, relatively to the mass, only about one-third as thick as an egg-shell. And right under the thin crust is a heat so great as to fluidize granite!

“The wonder is not that earthquakes lift their menacing voices, or that the shell occasionally cracks wide enough to let a town drop in, but that the whole thing does not break up in an explosion.

"How thoroughly science agrees with the Bible in the suggestion that the end will be by fire! When this world is ready to be thrown as cinder along the track of God's way, how easy, with one stroke, to break in the crust, and let the pent-up energy at the center do the rest! This may be speculation; but so the Bible talks; and, increasingly, so science affirms."

Spring brought Grace's eighteenth birthday. The family had all been secretly planning how to observe it best. Miss Catherine and Miss Ida had each money left by their father, that yielded a small income, quite enough to pay their board, to clothe them, and to use in doing good. For some time they had been saving money toward Grace's piano, and now took Mr. Charlton into their confidence. The result was a family council, called in Grace's absence. Catharine and Ida would each give one hundred dollars; Mrs. Charlton, fifty; Edward had saved from sale of stones from his quarry, twenty-five; Albert brought five dollars, from ginseng-roots sold to the druggist; and Mrs. Gray, five, from the sale of old silver. Something would be allowed for the old piano. Could her father supply the deficiency, if there were not enough? That he would gladly do. Ida and he would select it, and have it sent down in time for the birthday.

“Grace must go for a few days to visit Hattie Graham, and bring her home with her,” suggested Mrs. Charlton.

“Yes, and we’ll have a lawn party for her—a surprise. Edward can take the carriage, and bring them home on her birthday morning. We can give the invitations as soon as she has gone; and while we’re in town we’ll get lawn-games and confectionery,” said Miss Ida.

The piano was selected and in place, the old one carried away, the lawn cleaned and arranged with seats and games, and the dainty supper stowed away in the store-closet, when the girls came. Hearty and earnest were their congratulations to Grace, and great the pleasure of the girls at the idea of the impromptu party. They examined the new games, and admired the outdoor arrangements, until the mother suggested that they must be fresh for the afternoon, when they went into the cool, shaded parlor to rest, and discovered the treasure! Only the father and Ida had felt anxious lest the selection might not suit Grace; but one look at her face as she touched the keys was enough. It was not merely pleasure and surprise, but love for the sweet tones, that shone there, and her fingers seemed to caress the keys as she played.

It was a lovely day, the air pure and sweet,

and dry and warm, while cool breezes played among the large shade-trees. The lawn seemed a fairy-land, with the bright young girls daintily and simply dressed, with the merry games and joyous tones. Many were the compliments showered on Grace and the efforts of several young gentlemen to win her special favor; but Mr. Warrener had brought with him his younger brother, who fortunately had arrived on a visit the day before, and his evident sincerity and cordial simplicity showed to good advantage beside the rather affected manners of some of Grace's admirers. Her visit to New York, her love of Lucy, and regard for Mr. Warrener, made them friends, and she enjoyed the rather lengthened visit he made his brother, without once suspecting that any thing but brotherly love had drawn him to the village and now kept him there. Mr. Warrener's family had not entered the whirlpool of gay society. They belonged in, and had been claimed by, a higher circle—the earnest workers for Christ, the unworldly rich people, that are nowhere more devoted and more conspicuous for good than in our large cities. The purity and simplicity of Grace's character attracted him as beauty, wealth, and style could not do. It was the value of pearl or diamond beside that of glitter and gilding.

He hoped that some day he might transplant this wildwood flower to a home of his own ; but now he must be merely her friend. He knew that such love as hers is not easily won, is never the result of romance or sudden passion, but the slow growth of regard and confidence ; and he was content to wait, even as Jacob waited for Rachel—a long service, that to love seemed short, because the gain would compensate.

“ Father,” said Edward the next evening, as the family sat together, “ I do n’t think it’s fair that a man has to wait so much longer for his majority than a woman. What good does it do Grace to be of age? She can’t vote ; and yet a man must wait three years longer, when his vote might do some good.”

“ My son,” said his father, “ you need be in no haste to enter politics. You will find that your precious vote, that was to help the right, will be more than neutralized by Mike’s, who, paid for voting, and so drunk as not to realize the risk he runs, will vote as often as he can get a chance. In this country we are only a minority. The rum-shops and gambling-hells would be closed ; the sale of vile books and papers would be not merely forbidden, but prevented, if the votes of educated and religious men, of the patriotic and far-seeing of our nation, counted.

But this is a government by the masses. You have nearly five years to wait, but much to learn in that time. Meanwhile Grace has one advantage over a voter. She has only the responsibility of trying to influence all around her for the right."

"Why, father, that seems to be about all that we can do."

"Yes; in addition to that we must try to reach the lower class of voters. Since our laws give the ballot to the ignorant and degraded, we have no remedy but in trying to reform them, that they may help to reform others. The task seems almost hopeless, since these men and their leaders are careful to leave open every avenue to sin. Men of influence, who might lead these poor wretches aright, drag them lower, and rivet their chains tighter, for their own personal or party ends. A man who maintains his purity at Washington or in office is a wonder to us. Often must the philanthropist and the patriot despair of our country's future.

“‘God’s ways seem dark; but, soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day;
The evil can not brook delay,
The good can well afford to wait.
Give ermined knaves their hour of crime;
Ye have the future grand and great,
The safe appeal of Truth to Time.’

But we must not wait in inaction ; we must attend primary meetings, and see that pure, good, capable men are nominated for office. We must work for principle, not party, and must remember that each evil conquered in ourselves or others is a traitor that would have been more dangerous to our country than a foreign foe. Greece, Rome, Assyria, all the powerful nations of old, perished, not from external force, but from internal corruption, that invited invasion."

"But, father," said Albert, "you did n't tell Gracie what advantage she 'll have from coming of age."

"Not much, I fear. It is a sort of legal fiction. The law does not give her control of her own property until she is twenty-one ; so that if she marries at eighteen she never has its control. It passes from the hands of guardian or trustee into those of her husband. But this fiction comes down from the olden time. When boys and girls were apprenticed, the girl was set free at eighteen. It is the mass of obsolete statutes that makes the study of law intricate. It might be easily simplified, so that any man or woman of intelligence could understand it. But, then, what would become of the lawyers ? You recollect, Edward, that I took you once into court, and the crier, in convening it, called aloud,

‘O yes! O yes! O yes!’—an utterly meaningless call, a relic of the time when French was used by educated people, and criers called, *Oyez, Oyez!* (hear, hear!) to secure attention.”

“I do n’t see, then, that Gracie gains any thing,” persisted Albert.

“Not unless she chooses to marry without my consent, or to go out and earn her own living.”

“Then, she does n’t have to obey you now?”

“I have no longer a legal claim upon her obedience, but on her confidence, her gratitude, her love for me as her father, I hold a valuable claim—one that should last through life, and that I do not expect to relinquish, even in heaven. In the same way she holds my love and tenderness, so that even wrong-doing on her part (if that were possible) could not sever it. She can always come to me in any trouble, or even after any sin, with the confidence of a child. I should be unworthy to bear the name that our loving, forgiving heavenly Father has so honored, were it otherwise. Remember, my dear children, that my highest happiness on earth must come through you; that real parental love is deathless, eternal as God’s love.”

XII.

THE next morning Mr. Charlton called Grace to go out with him on the farm. As they walked along he said: "I would like to make provision for you, Gracie, since it is so hard for a woman to find suitable work. Boys can take care of themselves, and generally do better when compelled to do so; but every woman should be placed above the temptation of marrying for money, by practical training or safe investment. But you know I have no bank-stock—nothing but the farm. Your mother's property has remained safely invested, as her father left it. She has used the interest for your education and her own pocket-money, and it has clothed you both. It is probable that she means to leave it to you; but I will not suggest even this—it is her own property. Now, dear, shall I give you land or fruit-trees? I am anxious that you should hold something that will yield you a trifle; but if I give you a part of the land it might make trouble in case you marry."

"O father, I am not likely to marry. But the boys should have the land. It is not more

than they will need ; and I will keep house for them, and wait on you and mother when you are old."

"Thank you, my dear. Stop a moment ; I want to look at the cows. Ha ! Lily—pretty Spot ! Do n't you think them pretty ?"

"Indeed, they are, father. They are so gentle, too. See them coax me to pet them !"

"Then, take these two as yours. Now, come a little farther. Here is a row of fruit-trees that shall be yours. They are just coming into bearing, and are all grafted trees. The fruit of these you must sell, and they 'll continue to increase in value for some years."

"Why, father, I feel rich. I could rest under my own vine and fruit-trees ; but I like our roof-tree best."

Next morning Grace found her cows ornamented with tiny bells, tied to their horns with blue ribbons—Grace's favorite shade, too—and each fruit tree had a zinc tablet with "Miss Grace Warrener. Do n't touch." It was evidently Albert's work.

Ever since the boys were twelve years old their father had paid them a small weekly sum when they had been obedient and industrious. From this their contributions to the Sunday-school and Church had come, and it had fur-

nished their stationery, etc. Now the father gave each a row of fruit-trees, to furnish additional pocket money for their increased needs.

For some months Miss Catharine held a daily Bible-reading with the three boys. For the past month she had explained to them our Savior's institution of a visible Church and of the symbols of his suffering and death; that he commands his followers to unite together for aid and sympathy and active work, that they are to honor him by openly professing their faith in him and working under his banner. She explained to them that, in partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we pledge ourselves anew to his service, and accept anew the salvation purchased by his sufferings.

The first Sabbath in July the three lads stood among a circle of young people, avouching themselves to be the Lord's, and accepting the seal of adoption into the great family in heaven and earth. "Now, then, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God."

Jim's heart swelled with the grandeur of the thought: no more alone and friendless; every Christian Church was to him a home.

"The household of God!" Here was a wonderful talisman to keep him from evil. How he

watched against temptation, lest it might lead him to forfeit his adoption! The idea elevated and spiritualized his whole being. From a sensual animal Jim was growing into a noble Christian manhood.

It was rich food for the village gossips, that the coarse, ignorant beggar-boy, whom Mr. Charlton had picked up in some gutter in Cincinnati, had actually been set up as their equal—taken into Church, indeed! The story was told with colorings and additions, until it reached the ears of the wheat-threshers. They had been incensed when they found that Mr. Charlton would not employ them this Summer, as he had done for many Summers, and now, when they learned that it was in order to keep whisky from Jim, and that he had joined the Church, they swore that Mr. Charlton should not save him; they would make him drunk before they left town. But they were careful to keep their plot secret, and no one at the farm dreamed of any danger.

Jim was returning from the village one morning with the mail, when the conspirators saw him, saw that he was alone and walking slowly. One of the strongest was sent to intercept him in the road with a bottle of whisky, while others concealed themselves in the bushes on the place, ready to help in case of need. They feared to

excite attention and alarm him by going in force. Jim came on slowly, his head bent in musing, his thoughts so far away that the coarse, burly fellow had seized him with an iron grip before he was conscious that any one was near ; and no one else was in sight. Involuntarily he shrieked, and then an earnest prayer for help arose from the terrified boy. He felt at once that to struggle would be useless ; his little remaining strength was thrown into prayer, and the effort with which his clenched teeth resisted all attempts to pry them open. The foul smell of the liquor made him faint ; there was no temptation now in it ; but his strength was failing. The wretch saw that he would not yield, and called to one of his comrades to bring tools from the machine to break his teeth and hold his mouth open. But both prayer and shriek had been heard. Suddenly Edward turned the corner, coming from the farm on horseback, on his way to Ida. He caught the situation at once, saw the men running with tools, and realized that there was not a moment to lose. Any measure to be effectual must be decisive. He raised his riding whip, and struck the man a sharp stroke across the eyes. The sudden agony made him release the boy, and stagger back. Instantly Edward seized Jim's hand, and swung him up behind him, and,

as the men came running up, the swift horse carried them over the hill at so rapid a pace that they soon discontinued the hopeless pursuit.

It was months before Jim dared to leave the place alone; but his heart was comforted and quieted by the thought that God answered his prayer, and sent Edward in his sore need, as surely as he sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths when Daniel was in danger.

With the coming of Summer Ida had given up her task of dress-making; for the women no longer needed her. As soon as they began to realize their own ignorance they began to improve, and with the realization of this fact of improvement came hope and vigor to stimulate the sluggish brains and energize the weak bodies. Life opened before them as it had never done in their youth; they worked now with interest and hope. Ida had often read to them as they worked. She had taught them to love pure, elevated literature, to enjoy nature, to estimate something of the real value of life. All had become earnest, working Church members, seeking to uplift the fallen, to help the weak, to fight against sin, and especially against the deadly evil from which they had all suffered. Their home was now neat and well ordered; the child had grown sweet and lovable under Miss Ida's training.

They prospered in their business, and managed their affairs prudently.

When Miss Ida came to leave them they had begun to understand something of her motives and of the good she had done them, and remembering how they had once thought her presence a restraint and her neat, careful ways fussy and unnecessarily strict, they were humble as well as grateful; and she left them with the glad consciousness that her work was already bearing fruit.

Yet no less is our work accepted when no fruit appears. The motive from which we labor, the spirit in which we offer our lives to the Master, is the real service. We plant acorns, and no result of our planting appears; yet many generations shall rest under the shadow of our oak-trees.

The Rev. Paul Warrener had waited long for Ida's release. One afternoon he asked her to ride with him, and spoke of the good she had done to her four *protégées*.

"You have already done more than many accomplish in a life-time," he said. "It would not be fair to ask you to take up a new task."

"Am I superannuated?" she asked merrily; "quite past all usefulness?"

"No, indeed. I trust that a long and useful life is before you. I am six years older than

you, and yet life never seemed so full or my heart so young as now."

They were riding through the woods, and the sweet birds trilled joyously their songs of youth and love. All the world's din seemed far away. They were passing through an enchanted land. The sunlight flickered through the leaves, and threw golden beams on the green sward, on mossy banks and fern-covered rocks. Yes, it was a grand, a joyful thing to live, and this was but the beginning of life—life here and hereafter!

"I know a family in the village," said Mr. Warrener, "that suffers for want of just such care as you could bestow. It is a large one; some of its members are feeble and some young, and it is motherless. The father does his best in his poor way; but how can he understand the needs of the little ones? Are you too weary of care and trouble to resume them for the sake of these destitute ones?"

His tone told more than his words; but, dearly as she loved work, was that all he could offer her? Only personal love could make a true marriage, and he spoke of *duty*! She answered quickly:

"It would be impossible to answer you, with no more knowledge of the case than your general description gives. The father may be a crusty,

selfish old man, and I might think it best to take away the little ones and provide for them without him. Who are they?"

They were just passing through one of the poorest, dingiest streets in the village.

"They are all around you; but the 'crusty, selfish old man' needs you most. Ida, you would complete my work. With you toil would be pleasure. You would spiritualize and enrich my life until it could not fail to accomplish good. Ida, will you not be my wife? Will you not come to me as my friend and fellow-worker here, and my eternal treasure?"

Still silence on the lady's part. Was this all he could offer—fellowship in work?

"Ida, my brother Howard loves your niece, and has already gained her father's consent to win her if he can; but his love is the growth of a few months, mine of years. I have loved you ever since you were a school-girl. Your silence tortures me. Say that you will be mine at once; I have waited so long. Let me take you to New York, and give my father and mother the joy of rejoicing with me."

The sudden, overwhelming thought that once she expected to go to New York as Arthur Montgomery's bride swept over her, and she said hurriedly, almost unconscious that she spoke aloud:

"O no! that would be impossible. I could not do that!"

Now Paul was silent; but at first Ida was too absorbed in the rush of old memories to notice it. Presently the very silence recalled her. She stole a look at him. He sat beside her pale as death, his lip quivering, his whole frame shaken with the effort to control himself. She began to realize what her words meant; that in the hasty expression of her unwillingness to go to New York as a bride, she had seemed to refuse his love. Her heart ached for the pain she had given so unintentionally. She could not speak, but her hand stole near his, and in a moment he would have understood her, when a loud voice startled them, and an old man on horseback turned and joined them.

"I'm mighty glad to meet you, Mr. Warrener. My Tom's had a dreadful accident, and the doctor has to cut off two of his fingers. He's awful afraid; but he says if you'll just come and sit by him he won't mind it. It's a shame to trouble you, and Miss Ida, too; but you know Tom's the apple of our eyes, and I'd ask the angel Gabriel down if I could get him."

"Of course, I'll come at once, Mr. Morton. I'm distressed about Tom." In fact, the clergyman's pale face touched and comforted the father's

heart as no words could have done. "But Miss Ida should not see the operation. I can give all the help that the doctor will need."

Just then a friend of Ida rode up on horseback, and gladly gave his horse to Mr. Warrener, engaging to drive Miss Ida home, and return the horse and buggy to the stable where they belonged. He hoped for a long ride with Miss Ida; but she complained of headache, and preferred going directly home. When there, she excused herself, and, leaving him with Grace and her friends, went at once to her own room to think.

"Why did she always speak so hastily? She had been so long trying to overcome this bad habit, and now it had given Mr. Warrener so much pain." There was no need to ask her heart whether it loved him. It was with him on the long road, in the room of suffering, in the sadness of his lonely return. Nor could she longer doubt his love. His extreme distress at her apparent refusal could not be merely the effect of disappointed plans or wounded self-love.

Yet she had tortured him so! Well, he would speak to her again, and she would make amends for his suffering. But he neither came nor wrote, and she went to the next Wednesday evening prayer-meeting with a desperate resolve to make him understand her. They were early, and as

he came forward to welcome them, Ida asked hurriedly, "How is Tom Morton?" and in the same breath, with a morbid dread of interruption, "You did not quite understand my last remark the other day, I think. It *was* quite irrelevant."

The sudden change in the clergyman's face showed that he understood at last, and as he walked home with her that evening the full explanation that was given almost compensated for the pain he had undergone.

Again Howard Warrener visited his brother, and came to the Charlton farm, but not with the timidity and wise caution of his first visits. He had now the father's consent and Grace's friendship to encourage him, and Grace was too noble and sincere to treat lightly a love so evidently pure and unselfish. She had never trifled with her own heart or that of another; therefore her womanly instincts were still delicate and clear.

"Thou shalt know him
By the holy harmony
That his coming brings to thee."

And so she loved as the flowers blossom, simply yielding to sunshine and air and dew.

Howard understood this sweet unconsciousness, and was careful not to disturb it by seeking any pledge or seal of love; but when it was necessary to go back to business he asked how soon

he might return and claim her as his bride. His question startled her.

"O, I do not know. How could I leave father and mother and the boys?—the dear old farm, too, where I have lived all my life? How can a noisy, busy city seem like home?"

"We will make a beautiful home there, and our love will sanctify and endear it. I will buy a house and settle it on you, so that it may be your home as long as you live. Then it will grow more and more homelike each year."

"I can not tell. I had not thought of it," she replied. "I have been too content to live in the present."

"Let us go together and ask your father," he said.

They found him alone, under his favorite tree. Heartily he gave them his approval and good wishes; but when Howard spoke of taking Grace away he looked grave and sad.

"You do not know what you are asking, young man," he said. "She is our one treasure, and so young! Surely you would not carry her so far from us until she is older and better able to take up the burdens of life. We might learn to deny ourselves and give her up in order to promote her happiness; but this would not promote it. It could not be the act of wisdom or

true love to send such a petted child out into the world without special preparation for it. Your early engagement may be right, because it relieves you both from uncertainty, and gives you the calm confidence and enjoyment in each other that makes this one of the pleasantest periods of life. You will need its sweetness to strengthen you for life's tasks. You will have each other's letters, and from them will learn any difference of taste or opinion in time to adjust it, or at least consent to it, before marriage. One great cause of unhappy marriages is, that the parties often know so little of each other."

"But, father, when we find fault in each other, would it be right to break our engagement?"

"It is a great mistake and wrong to enter lightly into a marriage engagement, but would be a greater wrong to both parties to consummate such an engagement when it is found that some hidden habit or sin will make the marriage unhappy. Little faults we all have; but these we must try to overcome for love's sake; and what require slow conquest, love must patiently endure. It is a mistake to call Love blind, as the poets have done. We would like to make idols of our dear ones, and fancy that they are perfect; so each discovery of weakness or wrong is a shock to us. Careful parents see more clearly the faults

of their children than others do—see them in their first beginnings, because they want to keep the fresh, young souls free from stain. I believe it always startles and alarms us to discover that the doctrine of total depravity finds proof in our own families."

"But, then, it really is not *total* depravity," said Howard, musingly. "Some excellent people escape it."

"Some have fought valiantly and steadily, and gained the ascendancy; but, as in any conquered nation, there will always be rebellion and outbreak. We must expect it in ourselves and in others; yet—

"To patient faith the prize is sure,
And all that to the end endure
The cross shall wear the crown.'"

Howard's letters were frequent and full—a sort of diary of his daily life; and gradually its very activity and fullness attracted Grace. She began to feel that even the sweetness of this quiet home-life was not enough, and to study and prepare herself earnestly for the time when she would need all wisdom to guide her decisions, her plans, her work among the poor, her household management, her control and influence over other minds. As she learned more of her duties and her needs, she appreciated more fully the wisdom

of her father's decision. Had she gone to New York untrained to meet these demands, she would have been compelled to lean helplessly upon her husband or his friends, and so would have been in danger of forfeiting her true place in life, and depriving her husband of the helpmeet and counselor he had a right to expect in her.

They talk of woman's demand for education and opportunity as a new thing. Was not Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth (of whom is no record), prophetess and judge in Israel? "And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Beth-el in Mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment." Did not Barak, when commanded to advance with his ten thousand men, and the Lord's promise of victory over Sisera, their oppressor, say to Deborah, a woman: "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go." Her presence inspired Barak; and her song—please read it for yourselves—is it not wonderful for its talent and dramatic power at that early day? Was not the highly educated Pharisee, St. Paul, instructed after his conversion by a woman? Were not holy women chosen to aid the apostles in their work? Did not women lecture on philosophy in the best days of Greece and Rome? and has there not been ever since a

long line of spiritual succession? To take her proper place in the world, woman has only to grow into Wordsworth's picture of her, drawn more than sixty years ago, before the present woman's rights movement was ever thought of. He first describes a girlhood like Grace's:

“She was a phantom of delight,
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.”

Next he pictures her with the wisdom and dignity of a woman, moving harmoniously in woman's sphere:

“And now I see, with eye serene,
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveler between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright,
With something of an angel light.”

It is character, not position, that he describes here, and every earnest Christian woman may realize in herself this picture. Whether married

or single, whether she rules or obeys, wherever she may be, will be equals to lean upon her, and inferiors to be controlled or guided by her, bringing the same need of self-control, of high principles, and of thorough cultivation.

XII.

THE Rev. Paul Warrener was very busy. He had fortunately found a suitable house, with a large garden and shrubbery, and was hurrying forward the necessary repairs. Since there were no church parlors, as in large cities, there must be room to receive all the congregation at the parsonage. It was a square, old-fashioned house, with a hall through the center. The back parlor was to be Mr. Warrener's study; there were sliding doors arranged, so that both rooms could be thrown into one. The front room across the hall was to be Ida's sitting-room, communicating with the dining-room, and so she could see callers when the minister was busy, without his being disturbed by their conversation. Shutters, closets, and a porch were added. The house was painted in shades of brown—the shutters of the darker shade, the walls daintily papered, and the woodwork painted, since it could not now be oiled. Then the whole was thoroughly cleaned, and by December the furniture began to arrive. First the carpets were put down, the parlors alike, in light brown, with small

bright figures. Each room had its own harmonizing tints, and they might have been designated as the brown rooms, the blue, the gray and scarlet, the green and gold. All the windows were hung with transparent muslin curtains; it was their aim to have nothing that would excite envy or prevent any one feeling at home in the parsonage. Many of their people had cheap lace curtains; but such curtains as Paul would have chosen would have soon made them discontented with their own. But none of the village people imagined how much the furniture cost. It was luxurious; but in its light brown coverings, and without any gilding, the parlors were plainer and less imposing than many of the village parlors, with their brilliant colors and showy mirrors. A few excellent engravings alone adorned their walls, copies of masterpieces.

Ida furnished the kitchen and dining-room, with Grace's aid. The bed and table linen were prepared by Mrs. Brown and the girls, under Ida's direction.

Before Christmas Mr. Warrener transferred his books and personal possessions to the house, and slept there. Then written notes of invitation were sent to every member of the congregation, to attend the wedding of Miss Ida Rochester and Rev. Paul Warrener, at the church, on Tuesday,

between Christmas and New-Year's, at four P. M., and a reception at the parsonage on the following Tuesday, and earnestly requesting that no one would bring or send wedding presents. This notice relieved the gossips of much anxious speculation. They had watched and criticised every arrival of furniture, and had already begun to doubt whether the wedding would come off at all. It did come off, and with fewer blunders than usually beset that trying time.

The day was brilliant, the church crowded. The bride was ready, and the bridal party entered exactly on time. Ida wore a soft dress of some thin, white woolen material, without veil or ornaments, except creamy white flowers in her dark hair and on her dress. The lace that trimmed it was exquisite. Lucy Warrener had insisted on bringing it as her bridal gift. Grace, and Howard Warrener, with a sweet young neighbor and Edward, were their only attendants.

After the wedding the family went directly to the parsonage, where Margaret had been keeping guard over the wedding supper. How pretty the new home looked! How merrily they all went over it together! How proud and happy the owners felt! There was much joyous, child-like merriment around the table. But before they separated Mr. Warrener said: "Brother, I wish

you to consecrate our home for us ;" and he brought a Bible, while all seated themselves near. Mr. Charlton read :

" O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth ; which keepest covenant and shewest mercy unto thy servants that walk before thee with all their hearts. Have respect to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee, that thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night. Now, my God, I beseech thee, let thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place."

" Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it ; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."

A short prayer of gratitude, of trust and submission for the future years, followed, and they parted with an added sense of the dignity of a Christian home and of new self-consecration.

The reception was a great success. It united

pastor and people, and made the few shy members of the congregation and strangers feel a personal interest in the parsonage.

Ida wore her wedding-dress, and she and Mr. Warrener received every one with kindly cordiality. The whole house was lighted up and thrown open for inspection. The simplicity and harmony everywhere, and its fitness for designed uses, made it an object-lesson in taste, in art, and in good sense. Henceforth it was sufficient to justify any innovation, that "it was so at the parsonage."

Among the happy throng no one was more interested and delighted than Mr. Morton and Tom. Ida, conversing quietly with a guest, heard the father say in hearty tones :

"Mr. Warrener deserves to be happy, if ever a man deserved it. Why, he was as distressed about our Tom's accident as if he had been his own brother. He held his hand steady all the time the doctor was cutting and bandaging it; and then he staid with him and comforted him better than his mother could 'a done, till he fell asleep. He used to come and bring him books and candy. And when Tom got well, seeing it was his right-hand and he 'd no use of it, he had him come to his study, and taught him to write with his left-hand; and then he hunted round, and got him

books to post up and writing to do. So Tom earns his own money, and is independent as any body. Yes, indeed! we've got a first-class minister and a first-class minister's wife—no mistake about that."

It was the first intimation Ida had of this quiet beneficence, and it warmed her heart with gratitude and love. After an abundant but simple supper, and some excellent sacred music on the parlor organ by Grace, Mr. Warrener read a few well-chosen words from the Bible; then all joined in a familiar hymn, and a short prayer closed the happy evening.

In March came a time of severe cold. It had been mild for days, and now the sudden sharpness inflamed Mrs. Gray's weak lungs, and made breathing a painful effort.

Only for a few days. The Master had been training and disciplining her for years. He had sat by the refining crucible until her heart and flesh failed. Sometimes he seemed to have forsaken her, sometimes to overwhelm her in anger, when, crushed and hopeless, she could only say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." But now the time of chastisement and of seeming neglect was over forever. Now his presence made suffering endurable, and the hope before her, the certainty that the fiery desert was past

and the land of rest in sight, gave her the simple happiness of a trusting child.

Jim watched her with the devotion of a son. His strong arm always lifted her tenderly, and arranged her pillows as she liked them. At night he laid his pallet in the hall outside her door, but seldom went to it. He seemed to prize every moment in her presence, yet never troubled her to speak, and no one understood as quickly the signs by which she made known her wants. He had just lifted her, to aid the struggle for breath, when she laid her head on his shoulder, and was gone.

Weeks before, while apparently in her usual health, she had written to each a short note of farewell, and of each one she begged, as a personal favor, that they would not mourn her loss. In the letter to her brother she said :

“ I shall pass out of darkness into light, out of pain into perfect pleasure, from heart-loneliness and sorrow to the welcome of my children and my husband, out of sin into perfect holiness, from doubt of God’s love for me into the presence and likeness of Christ. Can you mourn for this? Will you not rather rejoice with me, and sing glad hymns around my grave, as did the early Christians? ”

And so they laid her to rest, in the glorious

hope of a joyful reunion, assured that the grave closed only upon the worn-out, weary body, the "cast-off dress." It had been her earnest request that there should be no black at her funeral, no mourning-dress worn for her; that the home-life should be no less cheerful, missing her.

"Father," said Grace that evening, earnestly, "I have been trying all day to realize the life on which Aunt Mary has entered; but it seems to me we know so little of it."

"Probably we know as much as is possible to our earthly faculties. Our missionaries find great difficulty in teaching savages about love, purity, self-control, since their languages contain no words that can express them. Nor can you explain a fine painting to a blind man, or the glory of the stars. How can he imagine sunlight? How can a deaf man appreciate music, unless, like Beethoven, he has become accustomed to connect certain sounds with musical signs before he became deaf? Can the dark little bulb, under ground all Winter, tell what the full-blown hyacinth will see or be like? Albert, please bring my pocket Bible from the library table."

"Yes, father; but we all hunted through our Bibles yesterday, and found so little, except in Revelation."

"Last evening I made a list of our Savior's

allusions to heaven. Let us see if we can understand them. He spoke of it as 'The kingdom of God;' 'Joy in the presence of the angels of God;' 'Treasure in heaven;' 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father;' 'In the world to come, life everlasting;' 'Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God;' 'That you may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom;' 'Because I live, ye shall live also;' 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory;' 'In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also;' 'To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' This seems small in space; but it is much in promise. Christ may have said more than is recorded, or they may have understood him better; for it is certain that the early Christians did not shrink from death as we do. To them it was the gate of life; and so desirable it seemed that they often courted martyrdom as a swift way thither. Probably our Savior, foreseeing this, was careful not to increase it; for observe how much more he dwells on present duty

than did the apostles. The early Christians buried their dead with glad words and hymns of rejoicing, before the fuller and more attractive pictures were given in the Revelation of St. John. There are a few facts plainly stated in our Savior's words,—

“The heavenly life is eternal.

“It is on a far higher plane than this life—equal to the angels and the children of God.

“It is full of joy.

“It is in the presence of God.

“It is with the sight of Christ and his glory.

“We shall have treasures there.

“We shall enjoy the equivalents of earthly eating and drinking.

“We shall have homes in mansions, each prepared specially for us, our tastes, our needs.

“We enter at death into immediate enjoyment of Paradise.”

“O father!” said Edward, “it does seem much as you explain it. It ought to satisfy us.”

“Yet we can learn still more by careful study of the Psalms of David and of the New Testament. We might deduce much from the analogy of God's love and gifts to us here in this world of probation and discipline. Our Savior himself calls the eternal world a world of reward. Therefore, every beautiful and pleasant gift here

may well make us ask, ‘ If these are God’s favors to sinners, and in a world lying under the blight of sin, what wonderful manifestations of love and glory and bliss will he make to his forgiven, accepted children in the land of eternal blessedness?’ ” They sat silent for awhile with this great thought ; then the father said, “ Sing my old favorite, Gracie, ‘ My Ain Countrie ; ’ ” and soft and low the sweet girl sang :

“ I am far frae my hame, and I ’m weary aftenwhiles
For the langed-for hame-bringing an’ my Father’s wel-
come smiles.

I ’ll ne’er be fu’ content until my een do see
The gowden gates of heaven an’ my ain countrie.

The earth is flecked wi’ flowers, mony-tinted, fresh, an’
gay ;

The birdies warble blithely, for my Father made them
sae.

But these sichts an’ these soun’s will as naething be to me
When I hear the angels singing in my ain countrie.

I ’ve his gude word of promise that some gladsome day
the King

To his ain royal palace his banished hame will bring,
Wi’ een an’ wi’ heart running owre we shall see
The ‘ King in his beauty ’ an’ our ain countrie.

My sins ha’ been mony, an’ my sorrows ha’ been sair ;
But there they ’ll never vex me, nor be remembered
mair ;

For his bluid has made me white, an’ his hand shall dry
my e’e,

When he brings me hame at last to my ain countrie.

Like a bairn to its mither, a wee birdie to its nest,
I would fain be ganging noo until my Savior's breast;
For he geithers in his bosom witless, worthless lambs
 like me,
An' he carries them himsel' to his ain countrie."

At first Ida did her small housework without assistance. Every thing was so clean and fresh and all in order that it was easy to keep it so. But as the months brought her more work among the congregation and more frequent calls from them, she was glad when Margaret suggested sending for one of her nieces to take charge of the parsonage kitchen. This was a great relief to Ida, who had been quietly looking over the community for some one whom she might employ. The universal tendency to gossip among people whose uncultivated minds and tastes find no higher occupation made her shrink from thus exposing her home-life to their discussion. A simple, truthful recital of their daily sayings and doings would not have alarmed her; but the report would have been warped and distorted by their own ideas.

Margaret's niece was a fresh-faced, neat, good-natured girl, and, though only about fourteen, strong, and accustomed to hard work. But she knew nothing of the dainty housekeeping at the parsonage, and could not understand why the steak and chops should not be fried instead of

broiled. "Why, you 'll lose all the nice gravy, ma'am," she said.

Ida explained to her carefully that when meat is exposed to the brisk heat of a clear fire, and turned every minute or two, then left covered about ten minutes over a slower fire, it retains its nourishing juices; whereas in frying they are drawn out into the skillet and dried up. In the one case you have tender, delicate, nutritious meat without gravy; in the other, nice gravy, with dried-up, tasteless meat. But if you want gravy, you can make it separately of tough scraps that are not nice for the table.

The care taken, in washing the dishes and silver, to use clean, hot water and white soap, and to rinse every thing in clean, hot water; to wash the glass in cooler water, to avoid cracking it; to use only fresh, clean towels for this work, and to keep an abundant supply of these always ready for use,—was, to Norah's untrained senses, quite unnecessary. But the parsonage seemed like a paradise to her, and Mrs. Warrener as grand as a queen; and so she tried to learn her ways, in the hope of making this her home, as Margaret had done at the farm. There she was nursed in illness and comforted in trouble, her letters written for her, and her wants supplied as carefully as those of any member of the family,

and a regard and respect shown that made her careful to deserve them.

Ida had established a mothers' meeting at the parsonage, which all the mothers in the congregation were expected to attend, for an hour's discussion of a mother's needs and perplexities. It opened with a few verses of Scripture and a short prayer, and closed with a hymn; but it was not a prayer-meeting, and the discussions were quite informal. There were many things that some of the mothers needed to learn, and no practical, useful topic was excluded, if it came naturally into the train of thought pursued. That the illnesses of their children might be the direct result of improper food or clothing was a new thought to many of them.

This informal meeting gave Ida an opportunity to learn the characters and needs of her people as she could have learned them in no other way. She did not belong to the coarse, prying class of people who ask without hesitation questions about private life and domestic or personal affairs that even a parent would not presume to ask. Nor could she visit her people, as even some tract distributors have done, with a quick eye to detect any thing wrong. She recognized the dignity of each individual soul and its right to unveil itself only to the eye of God.

She knew, too, that to him each soul, however ignorant or degraded, is precious, and for his sake she sought to elevate and guide them. While she never attempted to find out any hidden burden, her kindness and reticence encouraged some to bring to her their secret sorrows, and these she accepted as a sacred trust. Seeking to know no more than was voluntarily revealed, she lightened the sorrow as much as possible by aid and sympathy and words of holy hope.

She never asked herself, "Is this poor woman a Christian? has she any right to claim God's promises?" She knew that the love that sends his gifts of rain and sunshine alike to the evil and the good, and that wept in pity over proud, persecuting Jerusalem, would receive the most unworthy as soon as they approached him in trust. Could any thing be more unlimited than the many promises?—

"Whoso cometh unto me, I will *in no wise* cast out."

WHOSOEVER WILL, let him take the water of life freely."

XIII.

HOWARD WARRENER again visited his brother; but now his object seemed to be only to urge on his marriage. "The year of engagement will soon be over," he insisted. "It seemed to me a long time, and I secretly rebelled against it; but you were right. Yet now that Grace has improved it so well, since she is so thoroughly fitted for her new work, you can not be so cruel as to extend it unnecessarily."

Howard was right. The impression left by her aunt's death, the serious and thoughtful course of study that she had pursued, had matured her character. Although not quite twenty, she was a woman in mind and manner. A quiet, self-possessed dignity had taken the place of her girlish impulsiveness. She had learned on what doctrines she could lean with unwavering trust, and what motives should prompt her. She had learned, too, her right to carry out her own convictions of duty, and her own individuality, in her daily life, and to live as one more accountable to God than to any human being. Now she

took as her motive for action and her reward this motto : "As to the Lord, and not unto men."

Mr. Charlton could only acknowledge the justice of Howard's plea. He saw, too, that Grace was ready to go with her lover, that her trust and regard were stronger than at the time of their engagement, and that her faculties seemed to ask a wider field ; so he said :

"Leave her as long as you can, and bring her back often. I see that she is now yours ; but not long ago she was wholly ours."

It was finally decided that the marriage should take place about the 1st of December, and that the young people should spend the holidays at his father's house, selecting their home and making their family arrangements afterward. Grace's pretty assortment of under-clothing was already prepared. Mrs. Brown made her simple wedding dress and traveling dress and her dainty house dresses ; but she took with her the money to purchase her street and evening dresses, and have them made in New York under Lucy Warrener's directions. Bonnets, articles of adornment, and even boots, were to be bought there at her leisure ; and so, instead of a weary woman exhausted with sewing, Howard Warrener found a fresh, blooming bride, worth more to his beauty-loving eyes than the trousseau of an empress.

It is strange that at that sweet, sacred, solemn time the principal thought seems so often to be of clothes! "Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment?"

The Rev. Paul Warrener performed the marriage ceremony at the farm-house. It was early in the evening, and the rooms were beautiful with flowers and loving faces. Lucy Warrener was chief bridesmaid, and Edward and his friend, Rosalie Thorne, again officiated. But there was one disappointment. Ida had not been well since the birth of her boy, and now a sudden change of weather made it unsafe for her to attend the wedding; so they gave her her reward, and she was more than content. She had a theory that it is not well for a young bride to go at once among strangers while her husband is still a comparative stranger, and therefore had urged them to come directly to her house after the festivities of the evening, and spend a quiet week there. Now they granted it, since otherwise Lucy would not have seen her friend or her nephew. This interval softened the sadness of parting, and instead of going from the excitement of the wedding to contact with strangers, ever ready to notice and criticise a bride, they were able to start on their journey with the assured dignity and coolness of old married folks.

Two Summers had brought back Grace to the farm, each time lovelier to the loving eyes and hearts there. This third Summer Howard brought her earlier, to help celebrate Edward's coming of age. Ida and her husband were already there, with their two little ones, when the travelers arrived the day before. The family held their celebration in the morning; the congratulations were given, and many valuable gifts. Then all followed Mr. Charlton to a lovely building spot not far from the house. Here surveyors' stakes were already placed, and they inclosed ground for a garden and orchard, as well as for a house and stable. Mr. Warrener read the deed aloud, reciting the metes and bounds of the property, and handed it to Edward.

"My friend," said he, "you are now a free-man in law and a freeholder. Never forget that your highest honor and privilege is, that you are also the Lord's freeman."

It was an unexpected gift; but Edward was at no loss to understand its meaning. It implied confirmation of his love, and a desire to make a home for him. The good father knew well what a safeguard from evil and an incentive to effort is a young man's love when worthily bestowed. In the afternoon his friends came for a lawn party, and the merry games and music and the

choice supper seemed hardly needed on a day that home love and happiness made so bright.

Howard was obliged to return to business ; but he left Grace at the farm, much to Edward's enjoyment ; for he took her into his confidence, and now the two were busy with pencil and paper, drawing and changing plans of houses, or out-doors, staking out garden and orchard. At last they settled upon a plan, and Grace displayed it triumphantly. It was so pretty and so adapted to its use that the criticisms of the family fell harmless. It was a cottage of three rooms, with a half story, the half story to contain one nice bed-room and a garret-room. A simple porch was to offer the welcome that a porch always seems to give, and in time would be beautiful with vines. The house-plan was carefully marked out, and then a list was made of the fruit and shrubbery and vines to be set out. As soon as the weather permitted, Edward planted these, and before Winter had frozen the ground solid, the cellar was dug and the foundation laid. In the Spring the planting was finished.

Edward worked earnestly on the farm. His father had promised him a certain share in the crops each year, since he preferred farm-life to any other. A position had been offered him, in which he could use and extend his knowledge of

geology, that of mineralogist to a mining company in New Mexico. It offered, too, an opportunity to make money; and for a time he had questioned whether it would not be best to spend a few years there on that account.

But this safe, happy life, the home that had been dear to him since babyhood, were too precious to be abandoned for money. Every tree on the large place was dear to him. As he thought of leaving it, he could understand why Swiss soldiers, forced away from the grandeur and beauty of their mountains, die of home-sickness. And as he thought of Rosalie, he realized that love, the tried and constant love of years, has a value far above wealth. He might amass a fortune by going to New Mexico; but it could never buy back lost youth, lost health, wasted love, or, that fortune to its possessor, the ability to enjoy innocent pleasures.

That Summer Grace spent at the sea-shore and the mountains with her little girl, instead of coming back to the farm. She was not strong, and her physician prescribed bracing air for them. So the Summer was passed in steady work, and by Winter Edward had his house built and inclosed. Then, when storms raged around the cottage and no farm-work could be done, he worked with the carpenter, thus hastening the

work and insuring its being done to suit him. When Spring brought its work on the farm, the house, stable, and poultry-house were completely finished. Edward had only to train the vines at the porch, to plant the small garden, to cut the sod close, to make the walks, and plant flowers. His mother had the house thoroughly cleaned, and now sunshine and the sweet air would finish the work, drying the house to healthfulness, and coaxing forward the growing vegetation.

The joy of watching the development of beauty and promise around his home remained always in his memory—a picture of happiness complete in itself, and yet looking hopefully forward.

Rosalie's father furnished the house, and this was also an enjoyment to Rosalie. She worked slowly, and selected each article for the new home with a loving care that gave it a preciousness incomprehensible to any one living in a boarding-house, or in rooms furnished to order.

By the time the pretty home was quite complete, the day to which they had given so much thought and preparation was near—Edward's wedding-day; and it was to be doubly crowned. They had chosen Albert's birthday for their wedding, since they could celebrate his coming of age at the same time, and thus have this one day

stand out in brightness as a perpetual joy of memory.

The first bird-songs wakened them, and grateful heart-songs arose from parsonage and farmhouse. Grace was there, with her toddling little girl—"danpa's darlin'," as she called herself—its mother as ready to enter into the pleasures of the day as in her girlhood, and Howard full of boyish gladness and sympathy.

When they met at breakfast, every one exclaimed that Mrs. Charlton had renewed her youth, and Albert and Howard teased her to put off the wedding, and go to town and have her picture taken instead, since they might never again be able to catch that bloom and brightness for the portrait Grace had so long wanted.

Yes: the parents were quietly, completely happy. No sorrow or shame had darkened their lives. Their children were their joy and pride. To-day would give them another daughter, would anchor their eldest boy near them, and make his life complete in home-love. Their youngest had safely passed the temptations of youth, and was entering manhood with noble motives and high aspirations. Grace's character had rounded and enriched itself, had grown self-reliant and unselfish with the trials and aids of a busy life, and Howard's love and esteem for her, and his watch-

fulness to save her every unnecessary burden and annoyance, made him dear as a son to them.

It was to be a whole day of pleasure. The guests were invited to attend the wedding at the Thorne farm-house, and after the luncheon (or breakfast, as it is usually called) to accompany the bride in procession to her own home, and finish the day at the Charlton farm-house as Albert's guests.

The weather was perfect. The bride, in her simple dress of transparent muslin, with no ornaments but flowers on her dress and in her fair hair, wore a beauty of varying expression that no artist could paint.

The marriage was at twelve precisely. Then followed congratulations; and they sat down to the wedding breakfast at half-past twelve. At two the procession was formed, and moved on slowly to the new home, only a short walk from Rosalie's old home.

An evergreen arch, with "Welcome" in daisies, surmounted the entrance. The one front door opened into the sitting-room, where every thing was complete. The mantel was banked with flowers, and that and the adjoining bedroom had the white walls relieved with festoons of evergreen and pink and crimson roses. Beyond the sitting-room was the kitchen, clean and bright

and temptingly fitted up, since this was to be also the dining-room. Some regrets were expressed that its beauty must be so soon spoiled, when Edward exclaimed oratorically :

“No foot of foreign foe shall defile it. Here my queen will reign undisturbed, and in her path roses and violets spring up spontaneously.”

The guests went everywhere, down into the dry, well-drained cellar, cool yet light and airy, with shelves and safe already in use; up into the garret, where stood the cedar chest of the bride, with its promise of future comfort in soft white blankets; to the full linen closet in the sloping-roofed spare bedroom; then down to the store-closet opening from the kitchen, and already filled for use; then out to stable and garden and chicken-house; everywhere they went but to admire, and some to envy.

“It is a perfect picture,” was the universal verdict. “Every thing is so completely adapted to its use, every thing so harmonious. It will be like living in fairy-land to have such a home.”

“And yet any of you can have such a one. It is only necessary to give time and thought to every point before beginning the work, and then steadily and perseveringly to carry out your plans. I have given to this little home nearly two years of thought and labor, and Rosalie

completed them in fitting up and furnishing the home. ‘No gains without pains,’ you know; but it pays.”

Then they went to the shady lawn as Albert’s guests, but before leaving the new home were asked to drink to its prosperity in iced lemonade.

Albert had chosen, as Edward did, to spend his life on the farm. His father had asked him, as a favor to the mother and himself, that whenever he should marry he would bring his wife to the homestead, so that they should not be left childless in old age; and, in return for this care, Albert should keep it as his home. This satisfied him better than any change could have done; so, while the guests admired his birthday gifts, there was no deed of land included among them.

“Ella,” said Mr. Charlton that night, when the merry party was over, and they were alone, “do you remember when we two began life here alone? Those long, quiet, happy days! Afterward your father died, and Catharine and Ida joined us; and now—look at our flock! With Jacob of old I can say, ‘With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become,’ not two but four ‘bands.’ How rich we are!—Ida and her children and husband; Grace and Howard and little May; Edward and Rosalie and

Albert. And the best of all is, that these treasures will be ours for eternity. They can 't be lost, as wealth and health and reputation may be. What a family circle we shall have in heaven!"

XIV.

WO years passed in healthful labor and innocent pleasure, and now Mr. Charlton felt that Jim's faithfulness deserved that his coming of age should be a white day in his life. They had no way of knowing the exact day. Jim could only remember that his mother gave him a cake and a peach, and said it was his birthday, and he was ten years old. It was only a little while after the Fourth of July. So they chose a day that promised to be fair, and sent invitations to his few personal friends "to spend the afternoon and have an early supper at Mr. Charlton's farm, to celebrate the twenty-first birthday of James Mason."

Jim received kindly congratulations from the family, and then Mr. Charlton walked out with him, to talk about his plans for the future.

"You are free now, James," he said. "Not only have you the privilege of voting, as a citizen, but your time is now your own. You can leave the farm and engage in any work you choose, or you can stay here, and I will pay you the regular wages of a man, leaving you to clothe

yourself and bear your own personal expenses. It rests with you to choose."

"O, Mr. Charlton," he answered, "do n't expect me to leave the farm. It's the only home I have in the world. The hardest time I ever had in my life—and you may guess I'd some pretty hard ones before I came here—was that time you thought you'd send me away. It turns me real faint now whenever I think of it. Why, sir, I love every tree and every animal on the place—and the family have all been so good to me! I'd rather work here for half wages than to get double wages any place else. I've always counted on staying here, and when the young gentlemen had families of their own, and you were past work, I'd keep things up, and you could rest."

"That is just what I would wish," said Mr. Charlton cordially. "Then consider this your home. But won't you be wanting a home of your own some time?"

"Well, sir," said Jim, bashfully, "every body has some kind of a dream. I've sometimes thought that when I save money enough it would be nice for me to rent one of your tenant-houses and have somebody to keep it snug. Why, that very first time I saw the place I thought I'd never be content till I'd a cow and chickens of my own."

“A very natural and right wish. Save your money, and if you find the right friend, secure her. You are as likely to have a home as any one I know. Come, now, and see your presents. I did n’t give them to you before, because I wanted you to be free to decide for yourself, without any bias of gratitude for favors.”

Jim threw back his head and laughed—a clear, pleased laugh.

“You’re too late for that, sir, the favors began so long ago.”

While they were out the gifts had been displayed in the dining-room, and the recipient stood overwhelmed by what seemed to him abundant riches. Mr. Charlton gave him a complete suit of clothes; Mrs. Charlton, a nice pocket-book, with ten dollars in gold; Mr. Howard Warrener, a good trunk, containing Mrs. Grace’s gift of a half-dozen each of nice shirts, collars, handkerchiefs, and socks; Rev. Mr. Warrener gave him a small tool-chest, well fitted up; and Mrs Ida, a dressing-case to hang on his wall, with brushes, combs, etc. Mr. Edward gave a set of books, and Mr. Albert a superior knife. Miss Catharine reserved her gift to the last, and presented it in person, because it was a memento of his first friend at the farm, Mrs. Gray. It was a small set of book-shelves that had hung on the wall

above her lounge, so that she could reach a book without troubling any one to hand it to her. Some of the books had been Mrs. Gray's, and some Miss Catharine had selected for him.

After dinner the guests came, and it might have been remarked that Norah was the only woman invited, but for the fact that she would naturally come to help her aunt. She was a shy girl, and did not join the other guests till supper-time. Meanwhile the young men were interested in strolling about the farm, in gathering fruit for themselves, and in the lawn-games, while they talked over their plans for the future.

Margaret and Norah set the supper-table on the lawn, and the early supper did credit to the farm's resources and to Margaret's cooking.

Afterward Norah was clearing the table, when Jim took the heavy tray of dishes from her to carry it into the house. It was a favorable moment, and he improved it.

“Do n’t hurry away, Norah. I’ve my chores to do, and then I’ll walk home with you.”

Under the early stars Jim told his love, and Norah promised to wait for him until his home should be ready. In the new dignity and pride of this last possession Jim became erect and manly, his face grew brighter, his whole manner more alert. It is a repetition of the old miracle

of fire from heaven, and that is not true love that does not elevate and refine and purify and sweeten the heart to which it comes.

“And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt [or test] Abraham.”

After what things? After calling him out from his own native land and friends to wander, homeless and landless, in a strange country; after sending there a famine that compelled him to go down into Egypt for food, at the risk of losing property and life under the despotism of Pharaoh; after promising that his descendants should be as the stars for multitude, yet leaving him childless when nearly a hundred years old; after raining from heaven fire to consume the home of his nephew, Lot, and sending him, homeless and miserable, into the mountains,—after all these trials, was another test of Abraham’s faith needed? Yes; for only through trial do we gain strength and self-knowledge. We give vigor to our bodies by exercise, not by rest. Courage and power of endurance come through danger and hardship, not by ease; and we take our strongest hold of God’s mercy and omnipotence when storms without and doubts within strive hardest to drive us from him.

They had carefully guarded Jim from temptation, had taken from his path every “stone of

stumbling," and had felt that his safety lay rather in the formation of good habits than in the attainment of high principles. But it is easy virtue to follow the narrow path in sunshine. The attacks of Apollyon, and the lonely way through the valley of the shadow of death, are true tests of faith and courage.

Jim had gone one day to the post-office near the station, and was just starting for home, when an accident drew his attention. Several lines of road centered there, and a brakeman had been struck and his arm crushed, by an incoming train. They lifted the man, and carried him into the station ; and then the cause of the accident was evident—he was stupid with liquor.

"What is to be done with him?" was the cry. The conductor of his train said :

"Take him to some doctor. I can't take him on to St. Louis in that state ; and, besides, I didn't mean to keep Mason. He's only worked for a few days, and has been half drunk all the time."

So the train sped out, and the half unconscious man lay groaning on the hard bench. But Jim's heart echoed every groan. The unhappy man was his father. Though he had not seen him for so many years, he had never forgotten the strongly marked, brutal face that had been the

terror of his boyhood. What should he do? O, what *ouyht* he to do? Could he take up this loathsome burden? could he bear the disgrace of calling this man father? What would his Church friends think? What would Norah think?

But they had taken a door off its hinges, and were already carrying the man to a doctor, and he followed them almost unconsciously. As he entered the office first, to make some support for the burden, the doctor greeted him cordially.

“How d’ye do, James? Nobody sick at the farm, I hope?”

“No, sir; only a poor man’s arm crushed under a car-wheel.”

“Let me see. O, the worst of it is, he’s poisoned himself so long that there’s left no pure blood to heal it. But I can’t do any thing here. He must be undressed and in bed. Where does he belong?”

“He’s a stranger. But can you tell me of a decent place where he could be boarded?”

“Why, no; you see, he’s likely to have delirium tremens. Yes, there’s the widow Jones. Her sons are strong, good-hearted young fellows, and they’re just out of work by the stopping of that woolen-mill. She’ll be glad of the chance to earn money—if the man has any.”

"O, I'll pay his board awhile; Mr. Charlton 'll help me," said Jim, hurriedly.

So he helped to undress and bathe the poor wretch. They laid him on the clean bed in the airy room, and the doctor examined the arm carefully.

"It's got to come off, and there's small hope; but it all lies in promptness. Can you help me?"

"If I may first take these letters home, and tell Mr. Charlton where I am. I'll be back at once."

The long walk seemed to take but a few moments, in his mental activity. The hope of advice from Mr. Charlton sustained him. But there was no one at home but Albert, and he hurried back. He had plenty of time for thinking as he sat, after the operation, in the darkened room, watching to keep the sick man from tearing off the bandages in his delirium. If he acknowledged this man as his father, he must bear all the disgrace he might bring upon him. He must give up all hope of marrying Norah; for his father would be a helpless cripple; he might live to be old, and yet would always be dependent on him. Never could he take him to his own home, to have it darkened and defiled as his early home had been, and Norah's life blighted like his mother's.

Doubts of the divine love and care tortured him. He had been trying to do his best. How had he deserved this heavy burden? Did God mean to crush him back into the wretched life he used to live? Would he not provide some way of escape from this trial, since he was not able to bear it? The prayer rose to his lips, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" and with the prayer came the whole scene—the mysterious agony in the garden, the human shrinking from the burden of our sins, the love that overcame all and endured all for our sakes. Falling on his knees, Jim confessed, with bitter tears, his unlikeness to Christ, his selfishness and self-seeking, and laid himself anew, soul and body, at the foot of the cross, to be used as the Master would. And with this self-renunciation came peace, "the peace of God that passeth understanding." The burden remained; he must carry it alone. But now it was a Christ-given cross, and he was to bear it after the Master, following in his very steps. Never had he so loved him, never clung so closely in simple trust and obedience, as now. Many weary days and nights did Jim pass in that sick-room, foul with oaths and curses because all liquor was denied the invalid, but never once did he recall his decision, though Satan tempted him often to question it.

When he told Norah, she had no reproaches for him, only praise of his kindness and self-denial. His forgiveness and patient care of his cruel father strengthened her love and confidence. It gave her, also, a new sense of duty and a new power of self-devotion. She had appreciated highly the goodness of Mr. and Mrs. Warrener; but they were to her—the minister and his wife. Poor folks could n't be like them. But the goodness of her own Jim was meant for her to copy, and love urged her to the task. Nor was their waiting time as long as they had feared. Strange as it may seem, they established their home the sooner, to have the feeble, helpless man under their care. Jim's watchfulness and his kind entreaties, his care to have his father supplied with coffee and nourishing food, had done much; but what confidence could be placed in the permanence of any reformation after thirty years of evil habits? While in the village he might have access to liquor, however carefully guarded; but in their own house at the secluded farm he would be safe. He lingered for several months. Miss Catharine read to him daily, bringing always some delicacy to make the Bible-reading less unwelcome; and in time he began to understand some of the simple truths of the Gospel, to realize how he had thrown away a heaven-intrusted

life, and to ask pardon, and strength to live like the good people around him, and to try to please God. Did ever any poor wretch turn toward the Father's house, and not meet a loving welcome, even "while yet a great way off?"

Men talk of the wonders of science and art; the most truly wonderful thing to me in this world is one beyond all human comprehension—"the love of God, that passeth knowledge."

Shortly after Jim came to Mr. Charlton's, when his father's term in the work-house had expired, and he had begun to realize the comfort and delight of life at the farm, he was tormented by the constant fear that his father might trace and reclaim him to work for him. The sight of a figure like his in the distance would make him tremble, and this fear often kept him from taking stolen trips to the village. Then it seemed to him that to meet his father would be the greatest possible evil. Now, as the father sank peacefully to rest, with loving words of parting and child-like trust in the mercy of God, Jim's heart was full of gratitude that this privilege had been given him to save a soul from death. He thought, too, of the gladness with which the good mother and grandmother would welcome the lost one found, and that there was "joy in the presence of the angels of God" over this penitent sinner. Ever

after the crown of his early manhood seemed to him to have been, not his happy marriage with Norah, nor the sweet, bright children that blessed his home, but this immortal soul saved through his instrumentality, the first sheaf that he had been honored to gather for the eternal harvest.

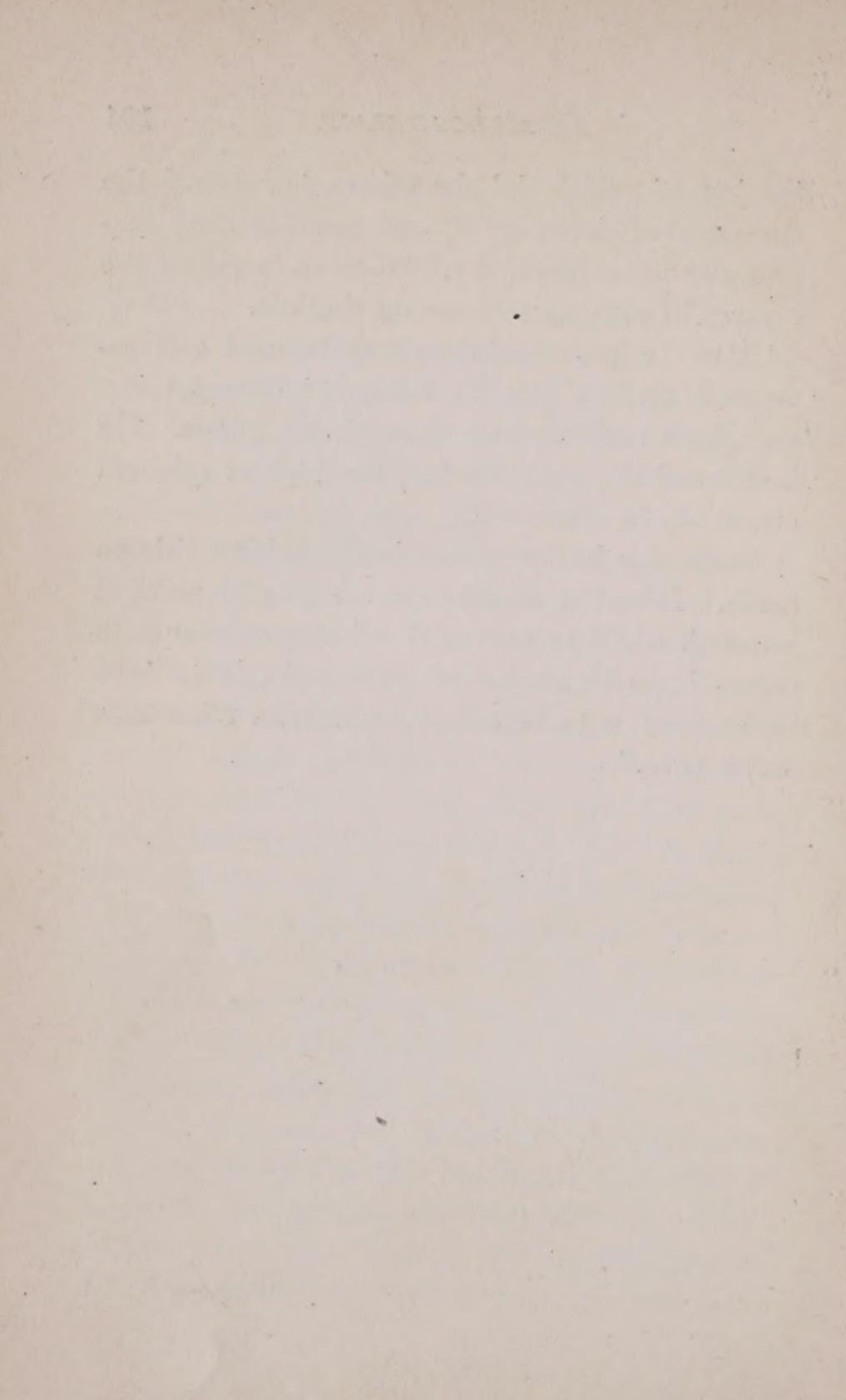
Jim had been a waif—a homeless, friendless wanderer. He had suffered from heart-sickness and loneliness, as any other child would have suffered. It was as much to quiet the heart-ache as to comfort him for want of shelter and food and fire that he had first taken the liquid poison. Then he had been lifted up into a home of happiness and abundance, and the years had been full of animal enjoyment. But when he was adopted into the "Church universal," and made a child and heir of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, the joy and glory of life seemed complete.

He had become a man, with a man's love and hopes, and the woman he would have chosen from the whole world, had the choice been offered him, was his wife, and she made his home attractive and restful. Soon his babies clung to him and caressed him, and they called out all the tenderness and nobility of his manhood. All that he wished he had gained, and now, added to all this, infinite Love gave him a still higher post and still more satisfying employment. He had found

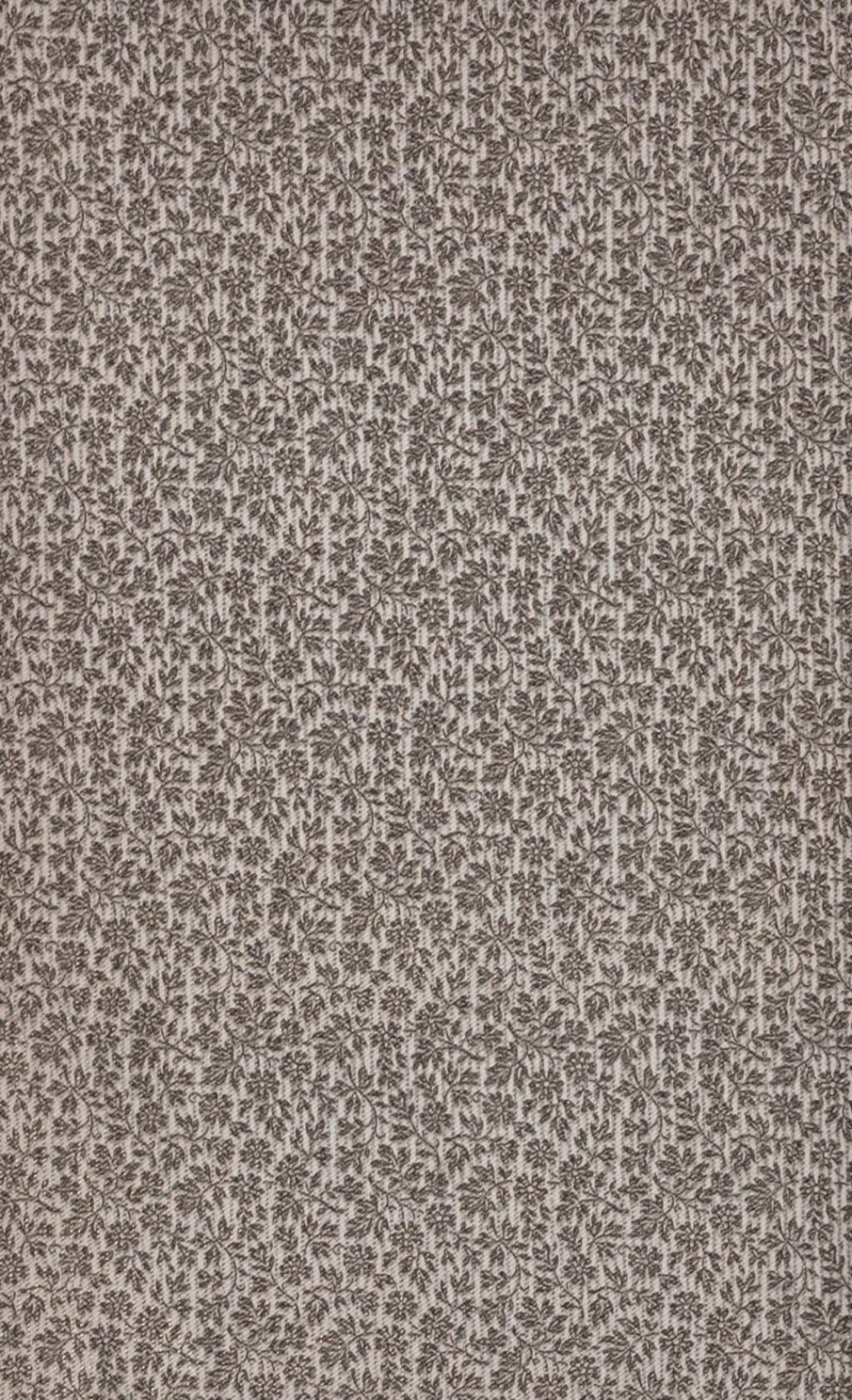
the joy of self-denial for others, had tasted the sweetness of doing good, and now his most earnest and heart-inspired efforts were to follow the Master in seeking and saving the lost.

Many a poor inebriate was rescued and redeemed, many a desolate home brightened, many a neglected child saved through his labors. He had found the grandest joy, the highest spiritual elevation, in this work.

Some day he hopes to win the noblest title on earth. Like the merchantman's goodly pearl, it is worth while to part with all other treasure to secure it, to be numbered among the little band so honored as to be called "WORKERS TOGETHER WITH GOD."









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